WESLEY CLARK FINDS HIS VOICE

RYAN LIZZA

IN DEFENSE OF REPORTING FROM IRAQ

JOSHUA HAMMER

THE NEW REPUBLIC

WWW.TNR.COM ▶ NOVEMBER 3, 2003

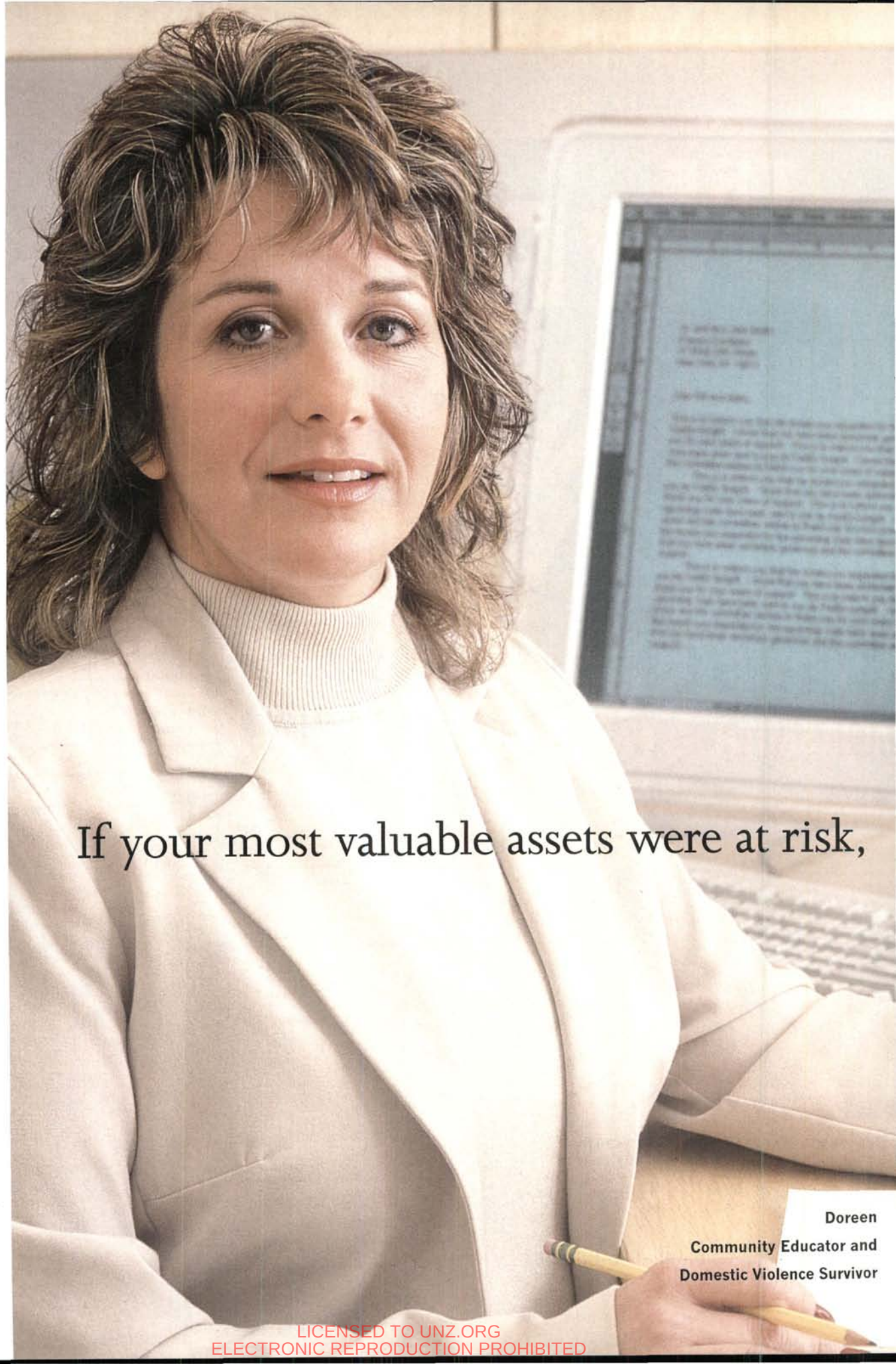
WHO IS FRANZ KAFKA AND WHAT IS A NOVEL?

ADIE SMITH

#BXBKDML **AUTO**5-DIGIT 94301
#TNR0000068171/5#44 16FEB04
RON K UNZ
555 BRYANT ST #371
PALO ALTO CA 94301-1704

19
0001
3011-2

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



© 2003 Altria Group, Inc. Photo: Jayne Wexler

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Domestic Violence affects
1 in every 4 women.

It costs American businesses
over $3 billion each year.

And your company can be
part of the solution.

Domestic violence is the leading cause of injury to women in our country, and its impact extends from the home to the workplace. The result? Shattered lives and billions of dollars in business losses annually due to absenteeism, turnover, medical expenses and lower productivity.

That's why helping victims of domestic violence is your business. Your company can change lives by building awareness of the issue and providing a link to information about resources in your community.

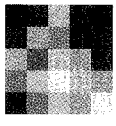
Let your employees know their safety is important. A few steps can make all the difference to your business — and to someone like Doreen.

wouldn't you protect them?

To learn how to implement a domestic violence workplace policy in your company, please visit:
www.safeatworkcoalition.org

If you or one of your employees needs help, contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline:
(800) 799-SAFE

Supported by



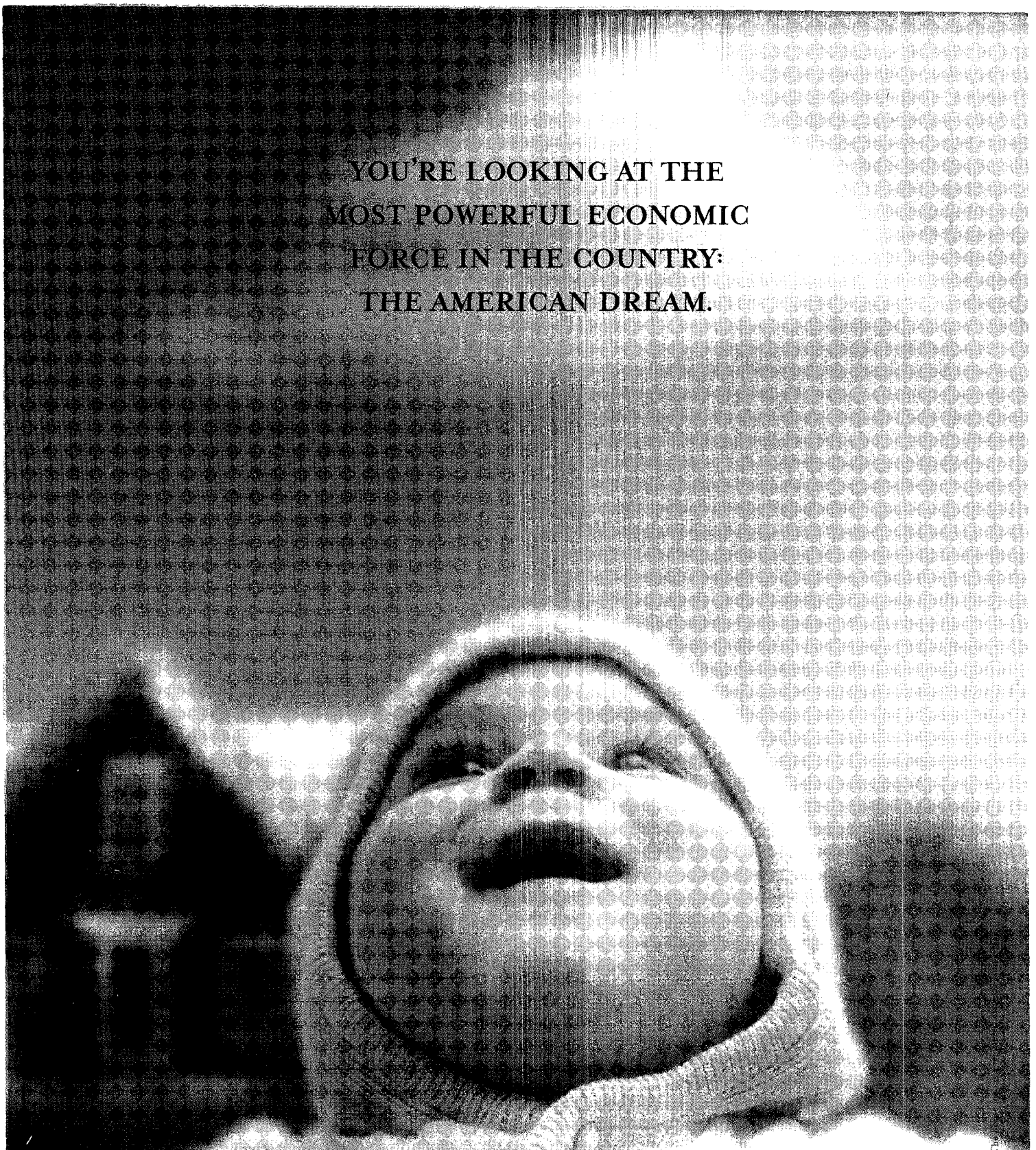
Altria

Kraft Foods
Philip Morris International
Philip Morris USA

www.altria.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

YOU'RE LOOKING AT THE MOST POWERFUL ECONOMIC FORCE IN THE COUNTRY: THE AMERICAN DREAM.



The population is growing and with it the American Dream of homeownership. In fact, every eight seconds a baby is born in this country — that's four million babies a year. This combined with the millions of families that move to our country in pursuit of the American Dream makes for a population that we anticipate will grow by 30 million by 2010. And when they dream of owning a home, we'll be there. Because as the American Dream grows, so do we.™

FannieMae
www.fanniemae.com

©2003, Fannie Mae. All rights reserved. TM

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
MARTIN PERETZ

EDITOR Peter Beinart
LITERARY EDITOR Leon Wieseltier
EXECUTIVE EDITOR Christopher Orr
MANAGING EDITOR J. Peter Scoblic
FOREIGN EDITOR Joshua Kurlantzick
SENIOR EDITORS
Jonathan Chait, Jonathan Cohn, Michelle Cottle, Gregg Easterbrook, John B. Judis, Lawrence F. Kaplan, Andrew Sullivan, James Wood
LEGAL AFFAIRS Jeffrey Rosen
ASSISTANT MANAGING EDITOR
Sacha Zimmerman
FILMS Stanley Kauffmann
THEATER Robert Brustein
ART Jed Perl
MUSIC David Hajdu
ARCHITECTURE Martin Filler
DANCE Jennifer Homans
TELEVISION Lee Siegel
POETRY EDITOR Glyn Maxwell
NEW REPUBLIC BOOKS (Basic Books)
Chip Rossetti
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Fouad Ajami, Akhil Reed Amar, Peter Berkowitz, Paul Berman, Jean Bethke Elshtain, Nathan Glazer, Anthony Grafton, David Grann, Yossi Klein Halevi, Ann Hulbert, Robert Kagan, Michael Kinsley, Charles Krauthammer, Jeremy McCarter, John McWhorter, Sherwin B. Nuland, David Rieff, Maggie Scarf, Ronald Steel, Cass R. Sunstein, Margaret Talbot, E.V. Thaw, Helen Vendler, Michael Walzer, Sean Wilentz, Alan Wolfe, Robert Wright
CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS
Jack Coughlin, David Cowles, Vint Lawrence, David Schorr
ASSOCIATE EDITORS
Michael Crowley, Franklin Foer, Ryan Lizza, Noam Scheiber, Jason Zengerle
ASSOCIATE LITERARY EDITOR
Ruth Franklin
ART/DESIGN DIRECTION
Joe Heroun, Christine Car/H2C Media
EDITORIAL-CORPORATE COORDINATOR
Laura E. Obolensky
PRODUCTION DIRECTOR AND INFORMATION-TECHNOLOGY DIRECTOR
Bruce Steinke
PRODUCTION MANAGER
Henry Riggs
ASSISTANT EDITORS
Spencer Ackerman, Kara Baskin, Christiane Culhane, Clay Risen
ASSISTANT TO THE EDITOR
Adam B. Kushner
LITERARY ASSISTANT
Deborah Friedell
ASSISTANT POETRY EDITOR
Melanie Rehak
REPORTER-RESEARCHERS
Josh Benson, Anne O'Donnell

PRESIDENT & PUBLISHER
Stephanie Sandberg
GENERAL MANAGER Robin Prausa
CONSUMER MARKETING DIRECTOR
Peter Glovin
ONLINE BUSINESS DIRECTOR Ari Gersen
ONLINE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER
David Hertog

ADVERTISING SALES & MARKETING
ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER Richard Parker
DIRECTOR OF ADVERTISING, WEST
Joan Stapleton Tooley
ACCOUNT MANAGER Julie Sturmak
BUSINESS ASSISTANT Ranee Jaber
MARKETING COORDINATOR/RESEARCHER
Kate Genser

TNR/ON SYMPOSIA ON PUBLIC POLICY
Sally Aman, Cheryl O'Donnell

MEDIA OUTREACH
Terese Schlachter

FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION
SENIOR ACCOUNTANT Debra Sotelo
ACCOUNTING ASSISTANT Vanessa Wilson
BUSINESS ASSISTANT Mandy Hansen

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
ROGER HERTOG, Chairman
MARTIN PERETZ
MICHAEL STEINHARDT

THE NEW REPUBLIC

Updated daily. On the Web at www.tnr.com.

THE NEW REPUBLIC
A JOURNAL OF POLITICS AND THE ARTS

NOVEMBER 3, 2003 WASHINGTON, D.C. ISSUE 4,633 VOLUME 229

Cover Story

Zadie Smith **33** **"The Limited Circle Is Pure"** "I *am* literature," Kafka declared. But his extraordinary prose rejects everything that the novel embraces. Most writers investigate what people make of their lives; Kafka wonders whether it is even possible to be alive. And this crucial question puts him at war with the novel itself.

Politics & the World

6 **CORRESPONDENCE** Dick Gephardt v. Michael Crowley, &c.

Peter Beinart **8** **TRB | Party Line** Why the Democrats voted against reconstructing Iraq.

The Editors **11** **Stand on Ceremony** The right way to uphold the Pledge of Allegiance.

12 **NOTEBOOK** An apology to our readers, &c.

Ryan Lizza **14** **Campaign Journal: The Pragmatist** His campaign may still be in turmoil, but Wesley Clark is finally finding his voice.

Clay Risen **18** **No Respect** William Donaldson is working wonders at the SEC. So why does the press think he's just another Bushie?

Dan Murphy **20** **Jakarta Dispatch: Quagmire** Aceh was supposed to be Indonesia's Iraq war. Instead, it's becoming its Chechnya.

Philippe Legrain **21** **Last Resort** The collapse of WTO talks last month in Cancún hasn't received that much attention. But it could herald a new wave of protectionism across the world.

Joshua Hammer **29** **Off Message** The Bush administration says the press only tells the bad news from Iraq. But there's a reason: That's the important story.

Martin Peretz **46** **CAMBRIDGE DIARIST | Declarations**

Books & the Arts

Stanley Kauffmann **32** **FILMS | Dissenting Again** Clint Eastwood's *Mystic River* is gripping but derivative.

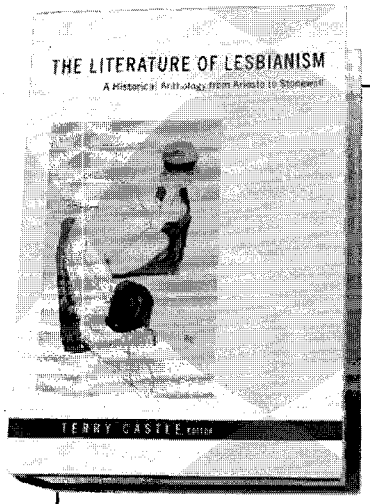
Alan Wolfe **41** **Teach Your Children** *Family Circle: The Boudins and the Aristocracy of the Left* by Susan Braudy

Eve Grubin **44** **POEM** *Rib Cage*

COVER ILLUSTRATION BY *Devon Bowman*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"A treasure-trove."—Susan Gubar



From Renaissance love poems to twentieth-century novels, plays, and short stories, this anthology brings together hundreds of literary works on the subject of female homosexuality including both male and female authors.

"Castle brings her characteristic good humor and wide-ranging intelligence to bear.... Recommended." —*Library Journal*

$45.00 **COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS** columbia.edu/cu/cup 800-944-8648

CORRESPONDENCE

POWER STRUGGLE

I WOULD LIKE TO CORRECT THE NEW REPUBLIC's interpretation of the process leading to Congress's passage last year of the legislation authorizing President Bush to use force against Iraq and my role in it (Michael Crowley, "Memory Loss," October 6). When Bush offered to work with Congress on legislation regarding a possible confrontation with Iraq, I felt it was my responsibility as a leader in the House of Representatives to engage on this matter. With the security of our nation at stake, I was unwilling to be a mere observer to the process. I was further convinced that entering negotiations was the right thing to do when the White House sent to Congress its preferred legislation—eerily reminiscent of the infamous 1964 Gulf of Tonkin Resolution—which would have authorized the president to use "all means that he determines to be appropriate" to, among other things, "restore international peace and security in the region." This would have given President Bush unacceptably broad latitude to take on any regional power he desired.

Faced with the possibility that the president could walk away from the negotiations, tell House Speaker Dennis Hastert and then-Whip Tom DeLay to move forward with his Tonkin-style resolution, or veto any legislation that didn't suit him, I sat down at the negotiating table to craft a resolution granting the president more limited authority. Through those negotiations, I was able to forge a responsible policy framework for moving forward on Iraq. In short, the additions I was able to secure called on Bush to work with our allies and others through the United Nations to build a consensus for action, instructed that Bush's actions against Iraq not undermine our nation's broader efforts to prevent terrorism, and required the president to develop a plan to promote stability and democracy in postwar Iraq. While there were limits to what I was able to achieve, I felt these parameters gave the president reasoned guidance on how best to proceed and forced him to be accountable if he failed to adhere to them.

CAN CATHOLICS SAVE CATHOLICISM?
SEPTEMBER 11, STILL
THE NEW REPUBLIC
THE OPERATOR
How George Tenet Undermined the CIA
SPENCER ACKERMAN AND JOHN B. JUDIS

TNR notes that, as our negotiations neared conclusion, Senators Joseph Biden and Richard Lugar unveiled a proposal that was more detailed but contained suggestions similar to my own. However, as your publication also notes, the White House immediately rejected it as a nonstarter, denying the proposal any momentum with the vast majority of Republicans and some Democratic legislators—particularly those Republicans who controlled what the House of Representatives would eventually vote on. It is nothing more than revisionist history to suggest otherwise.

Please address letters to Correspondence, **The New Republic**, 1331 H Street, NW, Suite 700, Washington, D.C. 20005; letters may also be sent electronically to letters@tnr.com. All letters should include the writer's full name, address, and telephone number; be typed double-spaced; and be fewer than 200 words. Letters may be edited for space and clarity. Please do not send letters via fax.

THE NEW REPUBLIC (ISSN 0028-6583), Vol. 229, Number 18, Issue 4,633, November 3, 2003. (Printed in the United States on October 23, 2003.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated April 21 & 28, July 7 & 14, July 28 & August 4, August 18 & 25, September 8 & 15, October 13 & 20, December 1 & 8, and December 29, 2003 through January 12, 2004) at 1331 H Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20005. Telephone (202) 508-4444. For advertising inquiries, please contact Mandy Hansen at (202) 508-4444 or our NY sales office at (212) 465-8447. Yearly subscriptions: $79.97; foreign, $119.97 (U.S. funds); Canada, $99.97 (U.S. funds). Back issues, $8.00 domestic and $10.00 foreign/Canada (includes postage & handling). © 2003 by The New Republic, LLC. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, D.C., and additional mailing offices. Rights and permissions: fax (202) 828-9383. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest. For hard copy reprints, call (202) 508-4444. Microform, Canadian Periodical Index, and CD-ROM are available through ProQuest, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Telephone (800) 521-0600. Postmaster: Send changes of address to The New Republic, P.O. Box 37298, Boone, IA 50037-0298. Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope (e-mail address: letters@tnr.com). For subscription inquiries or problems call (800) 827-1289 or visit our website at www.thenewrepublic.com.

MORGENTHAU MEMORIAL LECTURES ON ETHICS & FOREIGN POLICY

A series of twenty-two lectures by leading thinkers in ethics and international affairs, including:

Wesley K. Clark
Waging Modern War (2003)

Amartya Sen
Human Rights and Asian Values (2003, 2nd ed.)

Hernando de Soto
The Mystery of Capital (2002)

Available for download or purchase from ***www.carnegiecouncil.org***

Carnegie Council
ON ETHICS AND
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In the end, the president signed into law a resolution that I believe provided sound policy parameters for dealing with Iraq. Unfortunately, his failure to give more than lip service to the prescriptions I was able to secure largely explains why we are where we are today in Iraq. And now we're all paying the price.

RICHARD A. GEPHARDT
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

A MAN APART

SPENCER ACKERMAN AND JOHN B. Judis's article on George Tenet was an unfair attack on a dedicated public servant ("The Operator," September 22). I strongly disagree with their attempt to make a case about his alleged politicizing of intelligence. Intelligence is not an exact science. A good director of central intelligence, such as Tenet, gathers the best information available, gets the intelligence community to analyze it, and makes a judgment. Judgments are imperfect and open to counterarguments.

I worked with Tenet at the National Security Council and have known him for nearly a decade. In working with him, the thing that struck me the most is that he is not afraid to speak his mind no matter what others, including his bosses, might think. He believes in the importance of the work of the intelligence community and, therefore, would do nothing to compromise it. He may have good political instincts, but that does not mean that he has made intelligence-gathering a function of politics.

While I am by no means an advocate of the Bush national security policy, I think both President Bush and President Clinton were right in having Tenet as the head of their CIAs. To my mind, the best line in Ackerman and Judis's article was: "Tenet surely deserves praise for his accomplishments throughout the past seven years, among them restoring the agency's sense of pride and putting it at the forefront of the war against terrorism." The authors should have stopped there.

BILL DANVERS
Arlington, Virginia

FRENCH CONNECTION

IN HIS REVIEW OF A RECENT COMEDIE Française production of Racine's *Esther*, Joseph Frank writes, "Scholars have long noted that the text of the Book of Esther contains no reference to God . . ." ("Haman in Paris," September 8 & 15). This statement is not true without an important qualification. In the second century B.C.E., the Jews of Egypt produced a Greek translation of the Bible—a miraculous translation, as they saw it, directly inspired by God—in which the Book of Esther contains many references to God. The Greco-Jewish additions to Esther later became part of the Latin Bible and still later of the French Bible in the form in which Racine would most likely have known it. Frank mentions Racine's closeness to the Jansenists; the mid-seventeenth-century French translation by the Jansenist Isaac Le Maistre de Sacy, widely admired and diffused in its day and quoted by Pascal and Bossuet, would surely have provided the Esther Racine knew best. The Sacy Esther contains, for example, a long prayer by the heroine expressing pious Jewish sentiments much like those Racine puts in her mouth in the passages that Frank quotes in his review. To point out this connection is, of course, to take nothing away from the literary and historic importance of the play or, otherwise, anything away from a thoughtful review.

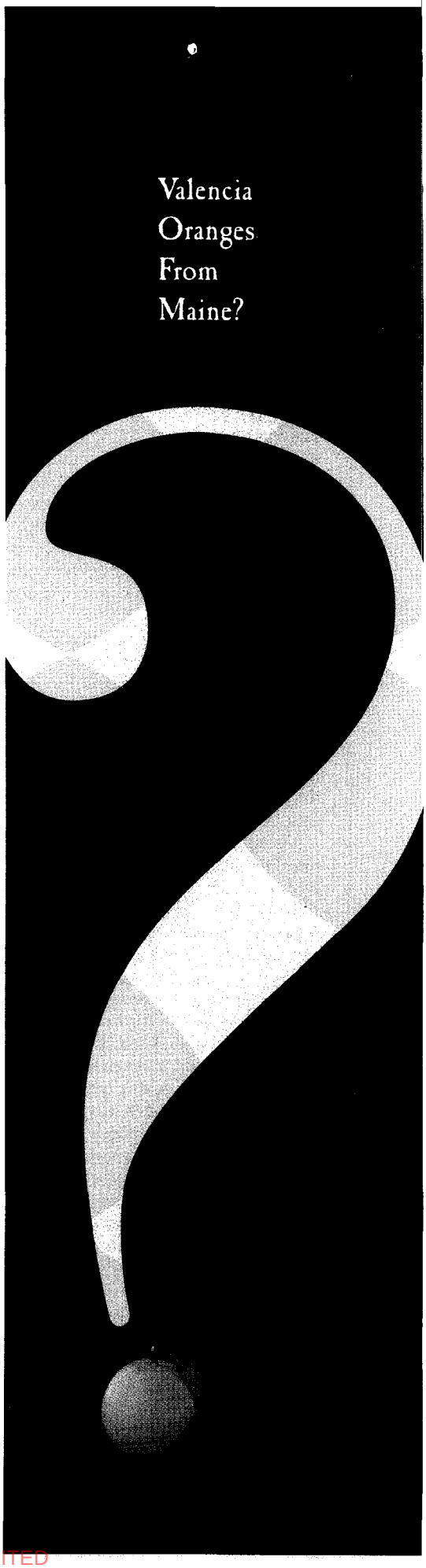
JACK MILES
Senior Advisor to the President
The Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities
Los Angeles, California

JOSEPH FRANK REPLIES:

I AM GRATEFUL TO JACK MILES FOR the erudite and illuminating information he has provided about the Greco-Jewish Bible of the second century. I did not do any elaborate research for my piece; I reread the King James version and used what I found in the few background articles that I consulted on the Esther story. All of them mentioned the problem caused by the lack of any reference to God in the accepted Biblical text, the decision to admit it as canonical notwithstanding.

It may well be that the role of the Jewish God in the play, which I attributed to Racine, could have been inspired by the version of the Bible he had read. Still, there is no question that he chose to emphasize the pro-Jewish aspects of the story. I wonder if such questions have been investigated in French scholarship. Let me thank Miles again for calling them to our attention and for his kind words about my article. ■

Valencia Oranges From Maine?



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Party Line

TRB
FROM WASHINGTON

In early May 1999, *Washington Post* reporter Guy Gugliotta asked conservative think-tanker Robert Kagan why the supposedly hawkish congressional GOP was so hostile to Bill Clinton's war in Kosovo. "The Republicans have two choices today," replied Kagan. "They can say they are peaceniks and isolationists, or they can say they don't trust Clinton to conduct this war. I think hatred of Clinton is huge." He was right. While at the time many commentators (myself included) denounced the Gingrich Republicans as isolationists, we were taking them too seriously. In fact, their motivation was almost entirely partisan. They did not trust Clinton to wield military power and therefore preferred that it be wielded as little as possible until a better man occupied the Oval Office.

It's worth remembering that history today, in the wake of widespread Democratic opposition to President Bush's $87 billion request to reconstruct Iraq. Conservatives are loudly calling the Democrats a party of isolationists. But that largely misses the point: It assumes the congressional Democrats have any serious foreign policy ideology at all.

In reality, there are a handful of genuine Democratic isolationists—people like Dennis Kucinich, who opposes rebuilding Iraq, just as he opposed Clinton's war in Kosovo. (There are also a handful of genuine Republican isolationists, for instance Texas Representative Ron Paul, a libertarian who opposed the $87 billion and the Iraq war itself.) There is a slightly larger contingent of genuine hawks, who support military interventions even when launched by presidents they loathe. Joseph Lieberman is the best Democratic example, John McCain the best Republican one. Finally, there is that large group of congressional Democrats and Republicans who are hawkish when the commander-in-chief hails from their party and dovish when he does not. Ideologically, it makes no sense that Democrats—who say keeping the United States safe requires improving the lives of people in the Muslim world—would oppose Bush's request for grants to rebuild Iraq. And it makes no sense that Republicans—who opposed even modest nation-building efforts in Haiti and the Balkans—would endorse such a costly one in Iraq. But on Capitol Hill last week, intellectual consistency hardly mattered. Democrats voted against the reconstruction money for the same reason Republicans opposed the Kosovo war: They consider the president a dangerous liar and don't want to empower him in any way.

How has partisanship come to so completely dominate foreign policy debate? First, because we live in a relatively new foreign policy era, and thus politicians haven't yet developed ideological commitments that might bind them when the White House changes party. The debate over U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union stretched over five decades, and, if you had developed a reputation as a cold warrior, it wasn't easy to go soft, no matter how the partisan landscape changed. But the '90s offered a blank slate. Was the battle against Slobodan Milosevic's genocidal nationalism the logical successor to the battle against Soviet communism, or was the point of the cold war that the United States should expend blood and treasure only against a foe that directly threatened our national security? After some dithering, Clinton bombed Belgrade and defined the answer for both parties.

Similarly, there was no obvious ideological precedent for the war on terrorism. Certainly, nothing in the GOP's foreign policy tradition mandated a preemptive war aimed at transforming Iraq into a democratic state. Indeed, top officials from the first Bush administration called the war an exercise in liberal utopianism. But a strong White House pushed for war, and both Republicans and Democrats formed their foreign policy views in response.

There's a second reason partisanship dominates foreign policy today: the ascendance of political consultants. There was a time when administrations hashed out important foreign policy decisions with a few senior members of Congress who considered themselves stewards of the national interest. And those members then brought the bulk of their party along. In 1996, Robert Dole, a holdover from an earlier congressional era, supported Clinton's deployment of troops to Bosnia to enforce the newly signed Dayton accords, arguing that U.S. credibility was at stake. (Dole's rival for the Republican presidential nomination, Phil Gramm, denounced him for it.) This year, Joseph Biden—the closest thing the Senate Democrats have to a foreign policy wise man—made a similar argument about the $87 billion, calling on his colleagues to put hostility toward Bush aside and recognize that the United States has to rebuild Iraq. But, on the crucial vote pitting loans against grants, Biden brought along only three of his Democratic colleagues.

He was drowned out by a bevy of Democratic strategists, who argued, in the words of pollster Celinda Lake, that Democrats must draw "clear distinctions" between themselves and Bush's increasingly unpopular reconstruction effort. A public memo from über-pollster Stanley Greenberg and former Clinton Chief of Staff John Podesta said "the $87 billion Iraq request was a shock to the country, and many voters can recite the actual number." It urged Democrats to attack Bush's request as a budget-buster, noting that "just 27 percent [of Americans] trust the Republicans on the budget and deficits, with the Democrats, remarkably, holding a 20-point advantage." A similar memo from Greenberg, James Carville, and Bob Shrum said the Democrats' "core message" should stress that Bush had "no plan for post-war Iraq." Sure enough, John Kerry justified his vote against the $87 billion by citing Bush's lack of a "real plan" to reconstruct Iraq. John Edwards, who also voted no, declared, "We don't have a plan."

In policy terms, the sound bite is almost meaningless. Whatever its earlier blunders, the Bush administration now clearly does have a plan to reconstruct Iraq. Its aid request specifies in excruciating detail how the United States will rebuild different sectors of Iraqi society. And, on the day Edwards and Kerry voted no, the United States won U.N. backing for a plan under which Iraq will write a constitution and then hold elections in 2004. But that's the whole point: On one of the key national security votes of the post–September 11 era, policy barely mattered at all. And it's not likely to anytime soon. **PETER BEINART**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Champagne Not From Champagne?

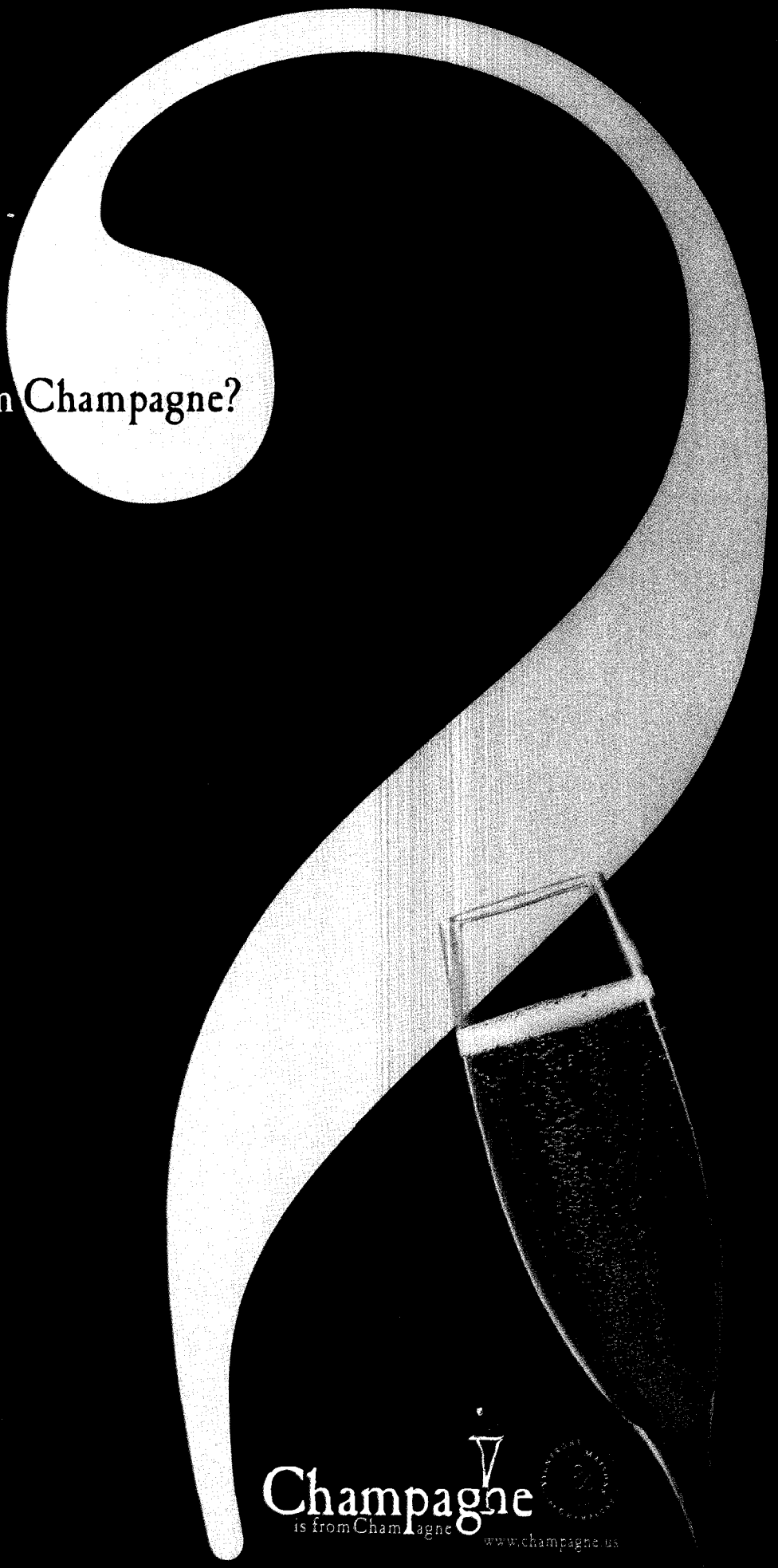
No way!

Oh, sure, some sparkling wines may look and even taste the part, but if it's not from Champagne, it's simply not true Champagne. That's because Champagne isn't merely a type of wine. It's a specific region 90 miles east of Paris with a long history of winemaking expertise.

Combine this unique northern location with a one of a kind climate and chalky soil as well as hundreds of years of experience and tradition. The result? The only grapes that yield the Champagne of legend — a heavenly wine that can be imitated but never duplicated. If the grapes aren't from this unique region where winemaking is a special art, then the wine really isn't authentic champagne.

It does matter where wines come from. A Napa wine is from Napa, a Willamette wine is from Willamette and a Red Mountain wine is from Red Mountain, Washington.

And, if it's not from Champagne, it's simply not true Champagne.



Champagne
is from Champagne
www.champagne.us

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Stay Informed on 481 Campaigns. Daily.

CQ Politics Daily

Only CQ Politics Daily, CQ's newest daily e-mail newsletter, will keep you completely informed of the latest developments in 435 House seats, 34 Senate seats, 11 gubernatorial offices and the Executive Office campaigns for 2004.

CQ Politics Daily's 12-month subscription gives you:

- Full political news coverage across the nation – never rehashed from other media
- "CQ Risk Ratings" rank of all the House, Senate and gubernatorial races to help identify the most competitive seats
- A dedicated staff of CQ reporters and editors providing original and insightful reporting with clarity and objectivity

CQ Politics Daily – get the exclusive CQ scoop on the 2004 campaigns today!

To order your $199 subscription today, go to http://store.cq.com/cq-store/pone.html.

CQ Congressional Quarterly Inc.
1255 22nd Street NW
Washington, DC 20037
www.cq.com

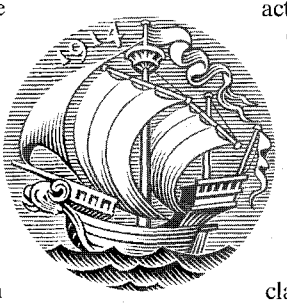
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Stand on Ceremony

THE SUPREME COURT last week agreed to decide whether the Constitution prevents public school teachers from leading an optional recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. The case has become a symbol of liberal judicial activism run amok: How could the Pledge, in which schoolchildren have recited the words "under God" since the 1950s, all of a sudden be unconstitutional? In fact, while the arguments against the Pledge aren't entirely frivolous, the Court should have no trouble rejecting them nonetheless: Despite the addition of the words "under God," even schoolchildren understand that the Pledge is a patriotic rather than a religious exercise. By upholding the Pledge, the Court can avoid aggravating the culture wars at a time when social conservatives are on the verge of admitting defeat. But upholding the Pledge should not become an excuse to resurrect the most conservative justices' troubling views about state support for religion.

In striking down the Pledge last year, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit in California cobbled together a series of confusing Supreme Court tests for identifying unconstitutional state support for religion. The Pledge "is an impermissible government endorsement of religion because it sends a message to unbelievers that 'they are outsiders, not full members of the political community,' " the California judges concluded. Comparing the Pledge to a prayer at graduation, the judges added that it placed "students in the untenable position of choosing between participating in an exercise with religious content or protesting."

But the Supreme Court has never said that any public exercise with religious content is an unconstitutional prayer: In 1983, it upheld the decision by state legislatures to open their legislative sessions with a ceremonial blessing on the grounds that similar exercises have long been sanctioned by history and tradition. And, in upholding the Pledge of Allegiance in 1992, Judge Frank Easterbrook of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit reached a similar conclusion. "[C]eremonial references in civic life to a deity" need not be "understood as a prayer, or support for all monotheistic religions," he concluded. Noting that the Supreme Court has repeatedly distinguished "ceremonial references to God from supplications for divine assistance," Easterbrook quoted justices from Sandra Day O'Connor to William Brennan who have expressed the view that Thanksgiving proclamations (which, after all, set aside a day to give thanks to God), "In God We Trust," and the Pledge of Allegiance serve the "legitimate secular purposes of solemnizing public occasions." Even Brennan, the strictest of the separationists, acknowledged that the reference to God in the Pledge "may merely recognize the historical fact that our Nation was believed to have been founded 'under God.' " For this reason, he concluded, reciting the Pledge is no more a religious exercise than reciting the Gettysburg Address.



In upholding the Pledge, the Supreme Court should be careful to distinguish between the healthy principle of religious neutrality, which holds that the government may not discriminate against or in favor of religion, and the dangerous principle of religious supremacism, which holds that the government may encourage religion in general, as long as it does not single any particular religions out for special favor. At least three justices—William Rehnquist, Antonin Scalia, and Clarence Thomas—have explicitly embraced the supremacist position in the past. And, while Scalia has recused himself from this case, Rehnquist and Thomas may argue that the Pledge should be upheld because it's a nonsectarian religious exercise, not because it isn't a religious exercise at all. A majority of the Court has rejected this view in the recent past, and it should emphatically reject it again.

Like many skirmishes in the culture wars, the Pledge case is about symbols rather than tangible benefits. It comes at a time when social conservatives are frustrated and angry at having lost the culture wars in the Supreme Court and in the court of public opinion. Having ruled against social conservatives in the gay rights and affirmative action cases last spring, the Court may be tempted to give their desire for public acknowledgment of religion a symbolic nod at a time when patriotic sentiments run high and popular opinion recoils at the thought of removing the Pledge from classrooms. But the reasons the Court offers for upholding the Pledge will be far more important than the result. By upholding the Pledge on the grounds that it is not a prayer at all, rather than upholding it because it is not a sectarian prayer, the Court can reaffirm a principle of religious neutrality that all Americans, religious and secular, should embrace with gratitude and relief. ■

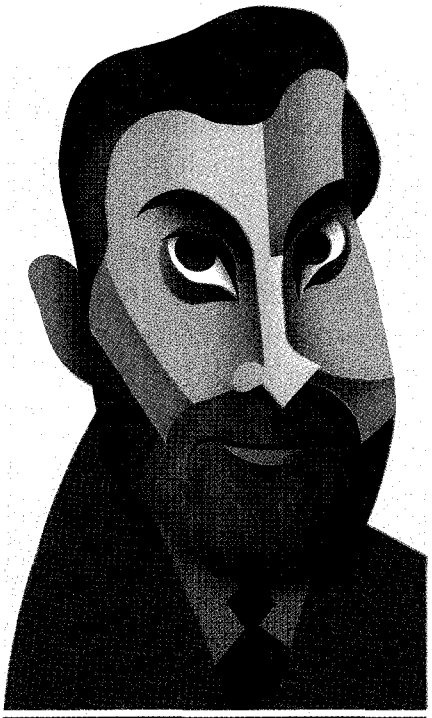
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NOTEBOOK

PAUL KRUGMAN MAKES EXCUSES . . . THE NEW REPUBLIC APOLOGIZES

THE GREAT UNRAVELING

POLITICAL DERANGEMENTS HAVE A way of finding each other. This week's unholy alliance was made between liberal Bush hatred and Muslim Jew hatred. On October 16, Mahathir Mohamad broke new ground in contemporary demagoguery: The Malaysian prime minister proposed anti-Semitism as a foundation for the modernization of Islamic societies. "1.3 billion Muslims cannot be defeated by a few million Jews," he said in his speech to an Islamic summit. "We are up against a people who think." By "thinking," the Jews "have become a world power." And so Muslims should imitate the Jewish accomplishment of world domination by reversing the mullahs' theological aversion to science. "We cannot fight them through brawn alone. We must use our brains also." Comes Paul Krugman, and in his column of October 21 in *The New York Times*, affectingly titled "LISTENING TO MAHATHIR," instructs his readers that this was anti-Semitism with a purpose. He explained, in an exemplary instance of left-wing Orientalism, that Mahathir is "about as forward-looking a Muslim leader as we're likely to find," and also, in an exemplary instance of the blinders of economicism, that Mahathir is just "a cagey politician" whose attempt to "cover his domestic flank" should not interfere with our appreciation of his enlightened economic policies. Krugman refers casually to "the offensive 28 words." This is dishonest: Mahathir's bigotry appears in sections 20, 32, 33, 34, 39, 51, 52, and 53 of his address. Nor is his call for science in Islam at all progressive: He appeals again and again to the Koran and the Prophet, so as to establish a religious sanction for his own style of civilizational warfare. And his high-minded summons to science is largely to "make up for our weakness in military terms." Most importantly, the purpose that Krugman



Paul Krugman

detects in Mahathir's anti-Semitism is nothing other than the only purpose that the hatred of the Jews has ever had: to distract the energies of a society from the depredations of its rulers by blaming its hardships upon an imaginary enemy. Nothing new here; just the ancient murderous rubbish. "Thanks to its war in Iraq and its unconditional support for Ariel Sharon," Krugman grotesquely (and typically) concludes, "Washington has squandered post-9/11 sympathy and brought relations with the Muslim world to a new low." Get it? The blame for Mahathir's anti-Semitism belongs to Bush. You might say that Bush is for Krugman what the Jews are for Mahathir. Krugman should act on his admiration for Mahathir and learn to use his brains also.

TO OUR READERS

WE ARE SORRY. LAST WEEK, Senior Editor Gregg Easterbrook wrote an item in his blog for TNR.com about the moral culpability of Hollywood executives who profit handsomely from movies that glorify violence and depict it with pornographic vividness. In the course of his denunciation, Easterbrook referred to "Jewish executives [who] worship money above all else." Many readers found the remark offensive. They were right. The phrase was right out of the classical vocabulary of modern anti-Semitism. We make no defense of these words, and we are mortified that they appeared under the auspices of a magazine that has for many decades been in the forefront of the campaign against anti-Semitism and bigotry of all kinds. Easterbrook's comment is false and ugly, and we do not wish in any way to make excuses for it. And neither does he, which is why he apologized for it and made no extenuations for it. He candidly wrote on our website last Friday that "[w]hat I wrote here was simply wrong, and for being wrong, I apologize."

We associate ourselves with Easterbrook's contrition. We, too, failed our readers. This is not the time or the place to reflect on the new and uncharted editorial requirements of blogs and the other instantaneous publications and postings on the Internet. However fast the medium or however slow, on paper and online, the editors of THE NEW REPUBLIC are responsible for the "content" that we put before the public; and, in this instance, we were delinquent in our responsibilities.

But, while we understand the outrage that Easterbrook's comment has caused, we are concerned also about the brutality of some of the criticism. There is another, important side to this story. We have known Easterbrook for many years, and we wish to say without doubt or hesitation that he is not an anti-Semite. Indeed, he is a person of high integrity. He has written prolifically and thoughtfully and with great erudition on many subjects, including

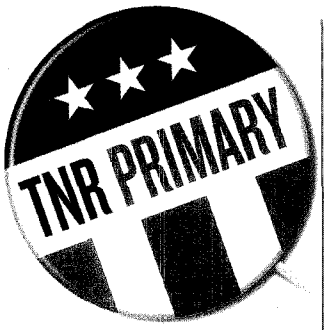
DAVID COWLES

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

science, the environment, politics, and religion; and the moral sensibility that appears in his writings is that of tolerance and open-mindedness. The many editors and writers who have worked with him over the decades of his career—at *Time*, *Newsweek*, *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, and *The Washington Monthly*, to name but a few—can all attest not only to his talent but to his character. A good individual said a bad thing. Sometimes this happens. (Sometimes a bad individual says a good thing.) When it happens, he must credibly express his regret and his understanding of how he erred. This Easterbrook has done. We have seen too many reputations unjustly ruined by media inquisitions and the vituperative politics of ethnic insult in America. We hope that the firmness with which Easterbrook's awful remark has been judged will be attended by fairness in the consideration of his character and his career. What he wrote last week is the terrible exception, not the terrible rule.

These accusations have, of course, been enormously upsetting to TNR's staff, which has spent a generation writing about Jews, Israel, and the elimination of prejudice. On these issues, we stand by our record. (The spectacle of this magazine defending itself against the charge of anti-Semitism would be funny if it were not so sad.) And we have many times in our pages insisted upon the moral importance of culture and worried about the deleterious consequences of the romanticization of violence in American popular culture. We do not believe that our arguments and our anxieties have been vitiated by this incident.

But we know that reputations are, by their nature, fragile things. So, as we apologize to you today, we also rededicate ourselves to keeping the faith of our readers in our old and proven commitment to decency in American life, and in the critical discussion of it. ■



AT WAR WITH HIMSELF

Candidate: John Kerry
Category: Intellectual Honesty
Grade: D

Appearing on "Hardball" last week, John Kerry reiterated his familiar position that there was a "legitimate rationale" for invading Iraq but that George W. Bush had gone about it in the "wrong way." But, this time, Kerry added a new twist, saying he might still, a year later, be negotiating with the United Nations over the use of force. "Why not?" Kerry asked. Well, there are a lot of reasons why not. For one thing, keeping more than 100,000 American troops amassed in the Arabian desert all this time would have been a nightmare. For another, America's diplomatic hand was at its strongest just after Congress approved the use of force last October. If the United Nations couldn't be convinced to support a war back then, it's hard to imagine the chances would have grown with time.

Before the war, some argued that U.N. support could be gained if the United States gave arms inspectors more time to turn up evidence of WMD violations. But we now know that those inspectors probably wouldn't have found anything incriminating—and that the political and moral cases for war would have been weakened. Reasonable people might argue that this would have been the best outcome. But that's not Kerry's argument—he still defends the removal of Saddam Hussein as justified. How he squares this support of the war in principle with his support for added months of negotiations is more than a little puzzling. Certainly, it's a lot more complicated than saying, "Why not?" —Michael Crowley

HISTORY LESSON

Candidate: Wesley Clark
Category: Intellectual Honesty
Grade: A

Newt Gingrich has a habit of penning vituperative but absurd attacks against political foes, and last week the former House speaker accused Wesley Clark of abandoning the rigid unilateralist bent he displayed in uniform for a mushy multilateralism in order to pander to Democratic primary voters. In a *Wall Street Journal* review of Clark's new book, *Winning Modern Wars*, Gingrich expressed shock that the general would argue that the war on terrorism be prosecuted through coalition action, since Clark's 2001 book, *Waging Modern War*, "outlined the frustrations of trying to serve every other country in the NATO alliance and his own" during the Kosovo campaign.

But, in truth, *Waging Modern War* is practically a liturgy for the aggressive multinationalist's choir. Clark writes that the alliance generated the consensus necessary for the success of the war; since "member governments could not afford to fail, ... their own political survival was at stake." This isn't a marginal aspect of the book—it's one of its key conclusions. The frustration Clark expressed had more to do with the intransigence of the Clinton White House and Pentagon than with that of NATO capitals. Maybe Gingrich should put down his pen and pick up the book.
—Spencer Ackerman

CHICKEN DOVE

Candidate: Howard Dean
Category: General Likeability
Grade: D

Let it be said that there's something unseemly and kind of pathetic about John Kerry's incessant invocation of his service in Vietnam throughout his presidential campaign. Just don't let someone working for Howard Dean say it. "Before he became a political candidate for president, John Kerry clearly believed that military service should not be used for political gain," Jay Carson, a spokesman for Dean, told *The Hill* last week. "And he was right about that. Unfortunately, now John Kerry and his campaign have a strategy to use that record to further his political career." Is there anything wrong with what Carson said? No. But it's not a point the Dean campaign should be making.

Dean, after all, did not serve in Vietnam. Although he had a relatively low draft lottery number, he was exempted from military service as a 21-year-old Yale student in 1970 thanks to a bad back. But Dean's back didn't prevent him from heading out to Aspen after graduation. "I paid $250 for a ski pass and skied 80 days on Ajax," the former Vermont governor once recalled to *The Aspen Times*. Kerry, by contrast, enlisted in the Navy after his Yale graduation in 1966 and went on to win a Silver Star, a Bronze Star, and three Purple Hearts. Does that make Kerry more qualified for the presidency than Dean? No. But it should insulate Kerry from criticism that he's exploiting his military record to advance his political career—at least from someone like Dean. —Jason Zengerle

For primary items updated daily and complete candidate rankings, visit *www.tnr.com/primary*.

CARICATURES BY ZACH TRENHOLM

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Campaign Journal

The Pragmatist

BY RYAN LIZZA

FOR SEVERAL DAYS last week, Wesley Clark went completely silent. His vocal cords became so stiff with swelling that the general was rendered mute. Campaigning in New Mexico, Clark was reduced to greeting would-be voters with a small handwritten sign: I NEED YOUR VOTE. The next day, the general cleared his schedule and spent four days wordlessly recuperating from viral laryngitis in Little Rock.

It was the perfect metaphor for his campaign. For a month, the Clark campaign has been about everything but the candidate's message. Clark's tumble from the Olympian heights of a reluctantly drafted American hero to just another Democratic candidate was swift. He made statements both supporting and opposing the Iraq war, muddying his antiwar credentials. A tape surfaced of Clark praising the Bush administration at a Republican fund-raiser, and news broke that the general had forgotten to register as a Democrat. Faced with charges that his campaign was one of "convenience" rather than "conviction," in the words of Joe Lieberman, Clark's stump-speech rhetoric quickly shifted away from the big ideas his advisers say he brings to the race and toward primary pandering ("I'm pro-choice, I'm pro-affirmative action, I'm pro-environment, pro-health care, and pro-labor"). Next, we learned the general was a registered lobbyist. (Wasn't he supposed to be a Washington outsider?) Then came the mini-flap over whether it was legal for Clark to take speaking fees as a candidate. (He gave the money back.) In the middle of all this, his former military boss, Hugh Shelton, made a cryptic comment questioning Clark's "integrity and character," muddying one more of Clark's strengths. Finally, a turf war between the grassroots fans who drafted Clark and the Washington political operatives who have descended on the campaign burst into the open. Angry letters flew around the Web; Clark's campaign manager resigned.

Individually, each of these episodes was minor, but, taken together, they overwhelmed the campaign's attempt to quickly position Clark as an above-the-fray candidate—"a historic figure," in the words of one senior adviser—unsullied by the pettiness of the long primary process. Clark is now trying to turn the corner. Aides insist the stumbles of the first few weeks were largely a consequence of putting together a campaign on the fly. "This is a truly grassroots draft campaign that had welded onto it a traditional national political campaign, all with a candidate who had never run for office before," says communications director Matt Bennett. "So all of this is totally bizarre."

But some of the kinks still haven't been worked out. The culture clash between the drafters and the Beltway Clintonites persists. "People just show up—'Hey, I was a draft coordinator. Hire me!'" says a Clark aide. "They love to talk to reporters and don't always know what they're talking about." Adds another, "There is some bad energy there. There's still a sense of turf wars." Jokes one Washington Democrat who helped prep Clark for recent debates, "Usually it takes months to build up that kind of tension in a campaign."

The problem for Clark is that the tales of staff intrigue and questions about his commitment to the party have started to drown out his message. For example, last weekend it became news when someone dug up another videotape of Clark praising President Bush, this time for winning the war in Afghanistan. It would be hard to find a Democratic leader who *didn't* praise Bush for that, but, because Clark's commitment to his new party is suspect, a throwaway line supporting Bush's victory over the Taliban became ammunition for the argument that the general isn't a real Democrat. That's pretty much how it has gone during Clark's first month as a candidate.

But, on Wednesday, Clark regained his voice and addressed voters in New Hampshire about the economy. It was his sixth speech and a reminder that, even if Clark isn't bringing many radically new ideas to the race, his campaign is about a lot more than squabbling staffers.

POLICY-WISE, CLARK IS not breaking much new ground. He recently unveiled a service proposal that echoes a plan by John Kerry. On taxes, he has allied himself with Kerry, John Edwards, and Joe Lieberman in calling for the repeal of the Bush cuts to top earners. He'd pump some of that recaptured money immediately into homeland security projects and to states struggling with deficits. He now has a ten-year plan to cut the federal deficit. About half the money would come from repealing those upper-income tax cuts and the rest from the interest savings on the national debt and uncontroversial steps like cutting corporate welfare, closing tax loopholes, and streamlining government. Like Howard Dean, he opposed both the war in Iraq and the $87 billion supplemental to pay for it. So far, on trade, he hasn't sounded any protectionist notes like Dean and Dick Gephardt, but he hasn't gone out of his way to defend open markets like Lieberman, either. A health care plan is on the way. Almost all of Clark's policy ideas are shared by one or more of his rivals. "Being the seventh guy to say we should jump-start the economy by sending money back to the states is not that exciting," admits one policy adviser. But the potential of the Clark candidacy has never rested on his specific policy ideas. Aides argue it's more about delivering a bigger, more inspiring message to sell those policies, one that lifts Clark above the tired field of politicians.

Obviously, his biography is central to this message. Although most people know him for his service in Kosovo, the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WOULD YOU

...set money aside every month to take your dream vacation?

...pay $65 to see your favorite sports team?

...drive out of your way to go to your favorite restaurant?

HOW FAR WILL YOU GO *for* PUBLIC LIFE?

AS AMERICANS, we will go the distance for sports teams, for simple pleasures, and things in between, but when it comes to public life, we are turning our backs. ▪ For fifteen years we at The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation have traveled the country, talking with citizens, leaders, news media and others about the state of our union. What we have heard in the last two years is sobering. ▪ Since the 9/11 attacks we have squandered the opportunity to put public life on a new course. People across America have retreated, hunkering down and thinking far more about their close-knit circle of family and friends than about their neighbors – or their neighboring communities. ▪ Now more than ever, each of us needs to step forward in our devotion to public life. Public life should be a place to debate and act on common challenges. It should be a place to find hope. Today, it is a place to be avoided. We can do better.

TO LEARN MORE AND TAKE ACTION

Contact The Harwood Institute today at (301) 656-3669 to find out what you can do and to receive a copy of *Devotion: Declaring Our Intentions in Public Life.* Or, visit us on the Web at www.TheHarwoodInstitute.org.

The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation is a non-profit, non-partisan organization that works within a long tradition of small, catalytic and public-spirited organizations in American history that have sought to improve public life and politics.

The **Harwood** Institute

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

general rarely mentions that war in his speeches. Instead, when Clark talks about terrorism, the experience he draws on is the 30 years of his military career he spent fighting the cold war. He recently recounted how his earliest memories from his childhood in Little Rock are of cold war threats to the United States. When he was a six- or seven-year-old in the 1950s, he recalls hearing radio reports about the Korean War. When he was about twelve, he recounted recently, he remembers being mesmerized by a *Reader's Digest* account of how the Soviets crushed the Hungarian revolution. When he was a senior in high school, choosing a career path, he recalled in another recent speech, John F. Kennedy and Nikita Khrushchev had just had a tense summit, the Bay of Pigs had just happened, and the Cuban missile crisis was a year away. "That was the climate I grew up in—the cold war," Clark said. "And I went to West Point because I believed America was in danger, and I wanted to do something to protect my country."

After West Point, Clark didn't just fight in Vietnam—he came home and was so disturbed by how the war had harmed the military's reputation that he devoted his career to fixing it. "I spent much of my military career helping to rebuild the war-shattered U.S. army," he writes in *Waging Modern War*. He's not just boasting. In 1986, a superior noted in one of Clark's performance reviews that it is "not possible to overstate the significance of Col. Wes Clark's impact on our Army." War-gaming as the Soviet or North Korean military, Clark revolutionized the training of U.S. forces when he ran the Army's National Training Center. He is credited with helping the Army prepare for the Gulf war. It's only a slight exaggeration to say that Clark's pre-Kosovo career was devoted to helping the United States win the cold war and overcome the Vietnam syndrome. Not a bad vein of experience for a Democrat to mine.

And Clark is beginning to take advantage of it. The parallels between his military career and his presidential campaign are obvious. Once again, Clark says, he sees the country in danger—this time from terrorism—and he wants to serve. Just as he found Vietnam had damaged an important institution he cared about, he wants to repair the damage he thinks the Bush administration has done to our government. He calls it New American Patriotism, but government reform may best describe the overriding theme of his campaign.

In a revealing comment to an MSNBC reporter recently, Clark said, "This election is about good government, fundamentally. Set aside the war on terror, that's very important—we want to be safe and secure. Set aside the economy, we've got to deal with it, we've got to create jobs—but all that notwithstanding, fundamentally we have to protect the government and the system, with a pluralist democracy that provides the rights for the minority, the will of the majority for our future generations. That's the issue that I see lurking in this campaign." Clark seems to be saying the Bush administration is actually the biggest problem the United States has right now.

In the Army, Clark gained a reputation as a fix-it man. He has written that he became an expert at "what businessmen would call 'turn-around situations and start-ups.' From staff officer to commander to trainer for units, many of my positions involved muscling-up an organization that had been 'low-performing' or swimming upstream to start something new." His performance reviews show he always approached these assignments as a pragmatist with a deep skepticism for conventional wisdom. One review notes how he "freely stated and defended opinions at variance with conventional wisdom." Another praised him for "tempering brilliant intellect with pragmatic know-how." The picture is of someone who is the opposite of an ideologue.

This pragmatism is now a major part of the general's message. Echoing something Bill Clinton has been talking about lately, Clark seems to be trying to set up a debate between ideology and pragmatism. Clinton put it this way: "They—Republicans—believe in government by ideology, enemies, and attack. We believe in government by experiment, evidence, and argument. We actually think we might be wrong now and again, we might have to change." Clark's speeches are filled with similar references. "Traditionally and ideally, we Americans meet our challenges by starting with the facts, analyzing the problem, and reasoning toward a solution—in as public a manner as possible," Clark said in one recent speech. "This administration does things in reverse. They start with a solution, cast about for a problem that 'requires' their solution, and mold the facts to make their case—in as secret a manner as possible." Sometimes it sounds like he's running as the candidate of the scientific method. This "just-the-facts" approach is politically useful. It allows him to make the argument that he's running for president not because he's an ambitious Democrat but simply because Bush has failed. "I don't oppose the president's policies because they are Republican policies," he said recently. "I oppose them because they don't work."

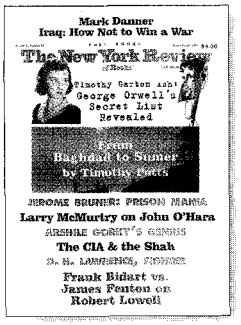
There are two other major themes Clark is weaving into his speeches to try to set himself apart from the field. The first is meritocracy. He holds up the military as the U.S. institution in which connections and birthright matter the least. It's a reminder that he rose from an Arkansas boy of modest means to a four-star general strictly on merit. The contrast with Bush is so stark it doesn't need to be pointed out. Similarly, one of the values of the Army he is trying to borrow for his campaign is equality of opportunity. "One of the things that I loved about the Army is that everyone, from every background, had a chance to advance," he said this week. "The same ideal applies to our country. There are great inequalities in America—vast wealth and deep poverty. But that doesn't have to divide us—as long as everyone has an opportunity, a chance to succeed."

Finally, Clark is trying to become the candidate of optimism. His advisers see an unfilled niche for a candidate with a message of hope to contrast with Dean's anger. "The candidate who comes up with a really forward-looking, opti-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

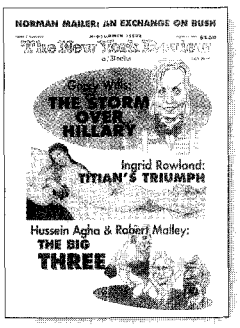
SAVE MORE THAN 46% ON A SUBSCRIPTION TO:

"The pre-eminent intellectual newspaper in English."*



The New York Review of Books is widely regarded as the world's most distinguished intellectual—and yet accessible—magazine. Each biweekly issue engages some of the world's sharpest minds in the most passionate political and cultural controversies of the day, and reviews the most engrossing new books and the ideas that illuminate them. Recent contributors include:

NEAL ASCHERSON · MARGARET ATWOOD · A. S. BYATT · JULIAN BARNES · IAN BURUMA
JOHN BANVILLE · NOAM CHOMSKY · J. M. COETZEE · ANITA DESAI · JOAN DIDION
UMBERTO ECO · JAMES FENTON · MICHAEL FRAYN · VÁCLAV HAVEL · DAVID LODGE
ELIZABETH HARDWICK · SEAMUS HEANEY · MICHAEL IGNATIEFF · DORIS LESSING
RICHARD LEWONTIN · DAVID LODGE · SUSAN SONTAG · JOHN UPDIKE · GORE VIDAL



With this limited offer, you'll receive:

➤ **Free Book:** *Fixed Ideas* by Joan Didion with a preface by Frank Rich. This book describes how there has been a determined effort by the administration since September 11, 2001 to promote an imperial America and how in many parts of America there is now a disconnect between the government and citizens.

➤ **A year's subscription at more than 46% off.** You'll enjoy a full year's subscription of 20 issues for just $34—over 46% off the regular subscription price of $64, and a saving of $56 (over 62%) off the newsstand price.

➤ **A No-Risk Guarantee.** You may cancel your subscription at any time, for any reason. We will refund you for the remaining unmailed issues. *Fixed Ideas* is yours to keep as our gift to you for trying our publication.

**Esquire*

The New York Review of Books

Return to: PO Box 23022, Jackson, MS 39225-3022

☑**Yes!** Please start my introductory one-year (20 issue) subscription of *The New York Review of Books* for only $34. I save over 62% off the newsstand price, and with my paid subscription, I will also receive *Fixed Ideas*—a $7.95 value—FREE. And I understand that I may cancel at any time and will be sent a refund for the unused portion of my subscription.

Name: _____

Address: _____

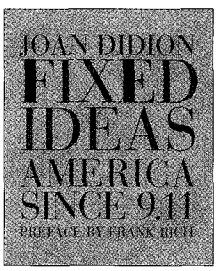
City/State/Zip: _____

NS03LNRD0

❑ $34 check enclosed* Charge my: ❑ AmEx ❑ MasterCard ❑ Visa

Credit Card Number: _____

Expiration Date/Signature: _____



FREE
with this offer!

For faster service, fax your credit card orders to: (601) 353-0176.
Please include your own phone and fax number in case of questions. *If you fax this order, do not also mail it.*

Visit our Web site: www.nybooks.com

*Make checks or US money orders payable to *The New York Review of Books*. We accept US Dollars drawn on a US bank, Canadian Dollars drawn on a Canadian bank, or Pounds Sterling drawn on a UK bank. We cannot accept international money orders. Credit card orders will be charged at US Dollar rates shown.

Rates Outside the US: Canada: $54US/$77.25CDN. Rest of World Regular Post (recommended for Europe only): $64/£42. Rest of World Print Flow Air Post (recommended for the Far East, Australia, Africa, New Zealand, and South America; 2–3 week faster delivery time): $91/£60. Please allow 6 to 8 weeks for delivery of your first issue.

This offer is for new subscribers only. Offer expires July 31, 2004.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mistic, big message is the one who will win," argues a senior adviser. "JFK, FDR, Carter, and Clinton all ran on fundamentally optimistic messages that offer hope." Clark began hitting this theme hard this week in his economic speech. It was one of the first speeches from a candidate that spent as much time explaining how much potential the economy has as it did explaining how badly Bush has screwed the economy up. Clark noted that he was "as optimistic as I've ever been about our future." He said he disagrees with "the pessimists" who say "our best days are behind us" and "that we're on a long slide we can't get off of." "In short," he concluded, "I'm bullish on America." It doesn't hurt that, in person, Clark is a naturally sunny and positive guy. Several of his rivals are not.

Overall, it's not a bad message. Now that he has his voice back, maybe people will start to listen to it. ■

William Donaldson's bum rap.

No Respect

BY CLAY RISEN

If Richard Grasso was the obvious villain in last month's upheaval at the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE), Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) Chair William Donaldson was the unsung hero. After all, Grasso's obscene compensation package might never have come to light if Donaldson had not requested in March that the heads of the country's stock exchanges review their management structures. When it emerged a few months later that, as NYSE chair, Grasso had received a $140 million compensation package in 2003, Donaldson let it be known he was unhappy through a discreet but sharply worded letter to the Exchange. What followed was straight out of *The Godfather*: Within days, the NYSE board was in revolt, and, a few weeks later, Grasso was out. Donaldson then reportedly vetoed several of the board's suggested replacements and even edged out a few other board members, such as Daimler-Chrysler chief Jürgen Schrempp, for good measure. When Grasso's interim successor, John Reed, took over, the first thing he did was travel to Washington to make sure he and Donaldson were on the same page.

But, while editorialists licked their chops over Grasso's demise, very few gave Donaldson credit for the deftly executed *coup de boardroom*. Robert Kuttner, writing in *The Boston Globe* shortly after Grasso resigned, told readers not to "hold your breath" on future reform at the NYSE, because, while "Donaldson may have been disgusted by Grasso's pay, ... he is a longstanding member of the same club." Donaldson, who led the NYSE himself from 1991 until Grasso took over in 1995, caught even more flak from the *Toronto Star*, which argued that the whole thing was a personal attack by Donaldson against his successor.

Such episodes are the story of Donaldson's eight-month tenure at the SEC. Early this year, almost immediately after taking the reins from Harvey Pitt—whom the press had roundly vilified for taking a soft approach on Enron and WorldCom—Donaldson began quietly but forcefully reforming the agency and going after a whole range of hitherto-ignored industries. "Given that Donaldson is a real Republican, he's actually been remarkably strong," says Barbara Roper, director of investor protection at the Consumer Federation of America. But, for all that, the media still largely paints Donaldson as a Bush insider, a political appointee of the same ilk as Treasury's John Snow or former Office of Management and Budget Director Mitch Daniels—Republican shills in nice suits. Editorial boards continuously downplay or even ignore his achievements, even while their business sections acknowledge his role in some of this year's biggest reform successes. In fact, given the speed and effectiveness with which Donaldson has turned around an ailing agency, it's no small stretch to call him the only bright star in the very dim galaxy of the Bush economic team—no matter what the papers say.

When Bush announced in December that Donaldson would be taking over the SEC, the country's papers and industry observers were almost uniformly skeptical. The *New York Post*, which has since elevated anti-Donaldson screeds to an almost regular feature, wrote that his tenure would be "long on management and short on reforms." Or, as one securities lawyer told TheStreet.com, "I guess [Bush] doesn't want an effective SEC. ... [Donaldson]'s too wedded to the industry." As if to reinforce the point, on the day Donaldson's nomination was announced, the Dow jumped 100 points.

And the skepticism was understandable, given that Donaldson has what may be the ultimate Wall Street insider's resumé: a member of Skull & Bones at Yale; an MBA from Harvard; a founding member of Donaldson, Lufkin & Jenrette, a groundbreaking investment firm; undersecretary of state under Richard Nixon; co-founder of the Yale School of Management; and chair of the NYSE, Aetna, and the Carnegie Endowment. Nor did it help that Donaldson isn't just a Wall Street insider, he's a Bush insider as well, having roomed with Bush's uncle Jonathan Bush as an undergraduate and having worked for Bush's great uncle in his first job after college. So, not surprisingly, to many observers who watched Pitt and Bush undermine the post-Enron corporate reforms, Donaldson seemed simply a smoother version of the same. "There was this assumption that anyone who Bush brought in to take over the job would take a similar approach," says Roper.

But, contrary to media expectations, Donaldson reversed the SEC's course almost immediately. Appearing before Congress in March, he requested an 18 percent boost in funding, an amount that exceeded even Congress's record

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

2003 allocation of $711.7 million. The money will help the SEC hire some 700 new lawyers and accountants, as well as update the commission's woefully outdated computer systems. The request was a decisive one, notes Joel Seligman, an SEC historian and the dean of the Washington University Law School, because, "in the long run, an adequately staffed SEC is more likely to deter fraud than any rule the Commission can make." Indeed, Seligman says, it's a rare occasion that an SEC chair can marshal those sorts of resources. "Dwarfing everything he's done to date is the budget. ... [I]n its history, there's only a minimum number of years that you've seen this kind of support." Though it didn't sway his critics, the request was the first solid evidence that Donaldson was serious about reinvigorating the SEC.

Nor did Donaldson stop there. He also made it easier to hire new accountants—a surprisingly difficult process at an agency so dependent on actuarial acumen—and he is garnering support for greater leeway from Congress for SEC regulators to hand down fines without taking companies to court. He even used his insider status to his advantage, bringing in an old ally, New York Federal Reserve President William McDonough, to run the newly created Public Company Accounting Oversight Board—a decision that was warmly received within the investor-protection community. And, at a speech before the National Association for Business Economics in March, Donaldson raised the bar for his success even higher, telling the audience that the corporate governance transgressions of the '90s were responsible for the current economic malaise—a bold statement, as it implied that economic growth depended at least in part on his ability to clean house.

And, by and large, that is what he has done. With Congress's support secure, Donaldson has proceeded to focus on issues that Pitt had largely ignored: corporate governance, stock exchanges, executive compensation, and hedge funds. He has already overseen a record number of enforcement actions this year—averaging an astonishing twelve per week. And, while many saw April's $1.4 billion settlement between the SEC and ten investment banks as insufficient (Senator Charles Grassley called it "half a loaf"), Donaldson made it clear that the deal was only the beginning of reform in the investment community and that more enforcement actions would be forthcoming if the banks didn't imbibe his reform message.

Indeed, it's that attitude that has proved Donaldson's best weapon. One of the biggest complaints about Pitt was that, for all his bluster (he infamously proposed the SEC chair be made a Cabinet-level post, with a raise to match), he was ultimately reactive, only going after corporate malfeasance when it made the front page. Donaldson, on the other hand, has played a big part in seeding press speculation about the NYSE, hedge funds, and mutual funds well before their respective irregularities became well-known. What's more, former SEC officials note that Donaldson often casts the swing vote toward tougher regulation on a five-person commission otherwise evenly divided between Republicans and Democrats. In the SEC's recent call for stronger control of the hedge-fund industry, for example, Donaldson threw his support behind the new measures despite opposition from the commission's Republican members, Cynthia Glassman and Paul Atkins. "He's behaving not like a Republican at all, in terms of rules and enforcement," says David Martin, former director of the SEC's corporate finance division who now runs the securities group at the law firm Covington & Burling.

NEVERTHELESS, THE MEDIA have continued to question Donaldson's commitment to reform, a fact observers attribute to his low-key—at times aloof—management style. Unlike the outspoken Pitt or Arthur Levitt, President Clinton's media-friendly SEC chair, Donaldson is understated. "I think his main problem is he's a quiet person; he's got a quiet style," says Stephen Crimmins, former SEC deputy chief litigation counsel. But, ironically, as Crimmins and others note, it's exactly that quiet style that has proved Donaldson's most successful trait—as his behind-the-scenes maneuvering during the NYSE scandal demonstrated.

The White House seems pleased with Donaldson's performance to date, if only because he's not as much of a lightning rod for bad publicity as Pitt. But Donaldson's management style, combined with the direction he has been taking the SEC, hint at a deeper and, in this administration at least, more radical motivation than many suspect. While Donaldson is hardly a fan of big government, he also seems skeptical of the White House's overriding commitment to deregulation, particularly when that commitment prevents the SEC and others from cracking down on corporate malfeasance. Contrary to the administration, he has come out in favor of stock-option expensing, and he has repeatedly told reporters that the landmark Sarbanes-Oxley corporate reforms were only a starting point. "Lawyers, accountants, corporate and financial managers, and financial regulators still have a lot of work to do," he said at his February confirmation hearing.

Indeed, Donaldson is intent on fashioning an SEC potent enough to force ethics back to the forefront of business. Granted, he has often expressed a hope that the business sector can right its own ship. "This is the beginning of a process in terms of the SEC being willing to help," he told *The New York Times*. "The New York Stock Exchange must come up with its own reforms." But Donaldson is no hack, and, if it takes some arm-twisting from the SEC, then he'll do it. His isn't a belief in big or small government but simply in good, effective government, in harmony with the market.

Of course, even that may be too much for the Bushies. And, were Donaldson to come out in favor of stricter rules regarding board-of-directors responsibilities—something he has hinted at in the past—Yale School of Management regulatory expert Paul MacAvoy predicts it would cause an irreparable breach with the White House. "He will go off into the horizon with flags waving," says MacAvoy, "and you'll never hear from him again." Maybe then, at least, the press would finally give Donaldson some credit. ■

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Jakarta Dispatch

Quagmire

BY DAN MURPHY

"JOE" IS 63 years old yet still so full of nervous energy that he mashes the filters of his Marlboro Reds to paste between his crooked teeth. For the past 15 years, he has been on a one-man crusade for human rights in Indonesia's troubled province of Aceh, at the northern tip of Sumatra. He has mediated between the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) fighting for an independent Aceh and the government in Jakarta and pushed for a nonviolent resolution to the province's 27-year-old conflict. For this, he has received death threats from both the rebels and the military.

But, now, even Joe has been silenced, jailed in May by the Indonesian military shortly after it declared martial law in Aceh and launched its biggest offensive against GAM. Held for three months, he was released only after suffering an apparent stroke. And, if Joe can be cowed, anyone can: Since the offensive began, scores of activists and journalists have stopped working in Aceh, scared off by a military that sees them as traitors. "We don't dare speak out anymore," says one Acehnese human rights activist. "The military has warned us that, if we don't keep a low profile, we will be treated like we're rebels"—which, in the parlance of Indonesia, means they will be killed. In fact, nearly every local independent voice in Aceh has been silenced, and foreign aid workers have been evicted from the province. Without anyone to watch it, the military is resorting to the tactics—execution, extortion, and collective punishment—that have made it so unpopular in Aceh in the past. The army has displaced as many as 100,000 villagers, and the Indonesian military says it has killed nearly 1,000 alleged rebels since May. But fewer than 400 weapons have been taken off the bodies of these people, raising questions about just how the military defines "rebel fighters." In addition to these deaths, the military has fessed up to killing 300 civilians.

In an awesome display, paratroopers have dropped into the province en masse to show the Acehnese that the government means business. Indonesia's generals have promised to flood the province with at least 50,000 troops to fight a foe that, by generous estimates, has fewer than 5,000 men under arms. Lending her support, Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri has urged the army to "crush" the rebels. And even the White House has tacitly signed on: As the Aceh campaign has escalated, the Bush administration has sought to increase military aid to Jakarta.

But Indonesia's tactics are horribly counterproductive. Rather than solving problems, the military offensive has shut off the best avenues Indonesia had for building a lasting peace. And, though the military and Megawati believe the tough Aceh campaign will decrease support for separatism in other parts of Indonesia—a sprawling archipelago of thousands of islands and different ethnic groups—in actuality, the offensive may encourage separatists. Worst of all, the military's free hand in Aceh could even prevent Indonesia's development into a stable, liberal democracy in the heart of the Muslim world.

THE REBELLION IN Aceh, home to four million of Indonesia's 234 million people, has rumbled along at a low level for nearly three decades. GAM, a tiny rebel group that wants to secede from Indonesia and bring an Islamic sultanate to power in Aceh, has long enjoyed a limited base of support in the devoutly Muslim state. But, before martial law was declared in May, GAM had neither the soldiers nor the popular support to achieve its goals. The rebels controlled a limited amount of territory, and observers say that, by 2000, average Acehnese, who have borne the brunt of the war—11,000 Acehnese have been killed since 1976—were fed up with the conflict.

The Indonesian military, after all, is far from the only human rights abuser in Aceh. In addition to GAM's efforts at extortion and intimidation, GAM members have assassinated political opponents in the province, kidnapped civilians, and torched schools. GAM has also failed to deliver on the political promises it made in the 1990s—a victory over Indonesia, an end to war, and an increase in living standards. Instead, as the conflict has ground on, living standards have slid and living in fear has become a fact of life. Slowly, many Acehnese were coming to see GAM as part of the problem, and, by 2001, the time seemed ripe for a political solution to the long-festering conflict. GAM and the government began discussing a potential deal in which the province would be given greater autonomy and more control of local resources—Aceh has considerable petroleum deposits—and the military would reduce troop levels in Aceh. In return, the province would remain part of Indonesia and GAM would gradually turn in its arms. The United States, the European Union, and Japan sweetened the pot by promising aid money to Aceh if a peace deal was struck. On December 9, 2002, a cease-fire between GAM and the military was signed, and, until May 2003, slow progress was being made toward a permanent solution.

But, when talks with the rebels broke down briefly earlier this year, Megawati, who fears looking timid in the run-up to the upcoming April presidential election, went to war. "No one wants to look weak on separatism in the current political climate in Jakarta," says a Western diplomat in the capital. Indeed, nationalist politicians and leading generals—who under the Suharto dictatorship played a major role in politics—are ascendant again in Jakarta, as the public grows tired of reformists who have delivered limited benefits since Suharto fell in 1998. The old guard has pressured Megawati to give no

Dan Murphy is the Southeast Asia correspondent for THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ground to GAM, and she has proved unwilling to defy them.

But, rather than routing GAM, the Indonesian government's approach appears to be breathing new life into a rebellion that may have been on its last legs. Many of the soldiers unleashed on Aceh have acted abusively and unprofessionally. Not only have many civilians been killed since May, but villagers have also been forcibly evicted from their homes during army operations, only to return to find them stripped of pots, pans, even livestock.

These military excesses erase memories of GAM's crimes and stoke anger at Jakarta. "I don't see how the current approach can be anything but counterproductive," says Sidney Jones, head of the International Crisis Group's Southeast Asia program. "Everything they're doing seems to be the opposite of a hearts-and-minds campaign." Anthony Reid, an Aceh specialist based in Singapore, concurs. "In general, history has shown that, the harder Indonesia has come down on the province, the more support for GAM has grown," he says. The current offensive, Reid adds, "guarantees that GAM gradually increases [its] support." Meanwhile, moderate voices, including many Acehnese supporters of unity with Indonesia, no longer feel free to speak out—for fear of being tarred as collaborators with Jakarta's shock troops. "The Free Aceh Movement has never provided any sort of framework for an alternative government in Aceh. They are largely a group of thugs," says an Aceh expert who worked on the peace deal. But he says that moderate Acehnese have been completely disenfranchised by the offensive, leaving few voices other than GAM.

A visit to the province confirms these worries. A friend who toured Aceh in August—like many foreign journalists, I have been prevented from freely traveling there—drove along the province's southeast coast. Nearly every fishing village, he says, was filled with idle men; since May, fishing has been banned because the military is afraid boats might be used to smuggle guns for GAM. "These people can barely live," he says. "They're selling their TVs, anything of value to get cash. This operation is doing nothing but breeding more fear and distrust."

Even though the Aceh campaign has sparked anger in the province, it might have some value if it deterred separatists in places like West Papua, where there is strong support for independence and a tiny rebel movement. But it probably won't. In fact, it's likely that the domestic political fallout in Jakarta from the Aceh offensive will inflame Indonesia's other conflicts. That's because Megawati and the military see the current offensive as a template for dealing with Indonesia's other separatist problems. Megawati has complained that too much, not too little, attention to human rights has been the problem in Aceh. Elements of the military believe they were too soft in East Timor, where a brutal counterinsurgency that killed tens of thousands of civilians ended with a U.N. independence referendum in 1999.

Aceh may be small, but the stakes in the conflict are not: It has become the proxy battlefield for the future of Indonesia's young democracy. If the war in Aceh, stoked by the generals, continues and Jakarta can convince its people that the anti-GAM offensive is necessary—a task made easier by barring journalists from Aceh—the military may return to the political stage. "What we're seeing in Aceh is an attempt at reconstituting the [Suharto] regime," says Michelle-Ann Miller, author of a doctoral thesis on Aceh at the Northern Territory University in Australia. "As was the case in a lot of Latin American countries, when they tried to move from military to civilian power, the military fought back. And, if you look at Aceh now, the military is wielding all of the power." And, while Miller believes a military coup is unlikely, she can foresee a scenario in which the military wields more and more power behind the scenes—with civilian leaders beholden to military opinions when it comes to dealing with separatism and communal conflicts.

What might the long-term consequences of this be? For the past five months, the military has controlled security policy in Aceh and reasserted the principle—lost when Suharto fell—that it will deal with any insurgency in its own time and in its own way. Now there are ominous signs in Papua, where independence activists say the military has been bolstering its numbers and is planning an Aceh-style assault on the independence movement.

Indeed, it looks as if Aceh will become the template for how Jakarta responds to all future insurgencies. And, just as the war in Chechnya has undermined freedom of the press and the rule of law in Russia, a greater role for the military in Jakarta will likely have an illiberal effect in Indonesia as well. In defending its actions in Aceh, the government in Jakarta has often said that it is afraid of what will happen to Indonesia if Aceh leaves. But the consequences of the Indonesian military staying in Aceh may prove just as bad. ■

The coming collapse of free trade.

Last Resort

BY PHILIPPE LEGRAIN

LAST MONTH, WHEN World Trade Organization (WTO) talks in Cancún collapsed in acrimony, the United States responded with a brave face. Though the meeting was seen as the best chance to push forward the Doha round of trade negotiations, which aims to slash trade barriers and boost the global economy, America's negotiators insisted the United States would continue to fight for freer trade. "For over two years,

Philippe Legrain was special adviser to WTO Director-General Mike Moore. His book, OPEN WORLD: THE TRUTH ABOUT GLOBALIZATION *(Ivan R. Dee), is due out in the United States in January 2004.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the U.S. has pushed to open markets globally, in our hemisphere, and with sub-regions or individual countries," said Robert Zoellick, the U.S. trade representative. "As WTO members ponder the future, the U.S. will not wait: We will move toward free trade with can-do countries." Zoellick's message is clear: If pesky "won't-do" countries block the multilateral, WTO route to liberalization, they will be left by the wayside. The United States will instead spearhead a push for free trade through bilateral and regional agreements.

Yet Zoellick's statement blends fantasy, hubris, and hypocrisy. Rather than emerging from the Cancún wreckage to lead the charge toward liberalization, the United States looks set to undermine global free trade. The bilateral and regional agreements Zoellick promises will actually tie world trade up in knots. Worse, U.S. election-year politics combined with rising unemployment could trigger a protectionist backlash in the United States, with China the first target and Europe not far behind. The potential consequences? A global trade war and possibly even a world recession.

THOUGH AMERICAN TRADE negotiators claim otherwise, bilateral and regional deals offer only a facade of free trade. They are, by definition, discriminatory: By granting preferences to some countries, they impose handicaps on others. Worse, negotiating regional and bilateral deals with many countries leads to a tangled web of rules—differing tariff rates, rules-of-origin requirements, and other regulations—that constrain commerce.

Such deals are also, by definition, partial. They encompass only a small fraction of America's total trade. Under Zoellick's watch, the United States has signed bilateral trade deals with two countries: Singapore and Chile. Singapore, the eleventh-biggest destination for U.S. exports, accounts for 1.67 percent of America's trade; Chile, the thirty-fourth largest, for a further 0.34 percent. In total, then, Zoellick has signed deals with countries that account for a mere 2 percent of U.S. trade, hardly an earth-shattering achievement.

But, wait, Zoellick might protest, you ain't seen nothing yet. The United States is also negotiating potential deals with Australia, Morocco, five Central American countries, and five southern African ones. It is also looking to open talks with Bahrain and the Dominican Republic. Yet add up U.S. trade with these 14 countries, and it accounts for a mere 3 percent more of the total.

Of course, Zoellick—and President Bush—have grander trading ambitions. They dream of creating a free-trade area that stretches across the Western Hemisphere (excluding Cuba) by 2005. Yet, even including this proposed agreement, known as the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), the administration's bilateral and regional ambitions amount to liberalizing trade with countries that account for just over one-tenth of U.S. trade.

What's more, negotiating the mooted FTAA is proving just as tricky as making progress in the Doha round. A meaningful FTAA must tackle controversial issues—such as Latin American demands that the United States reduce its farm subsidies and America's insistence that Latin American countries accept rules on services and investment—on which agreement has so far proved elusive at the WTO. Yet neither side is willing to undermine its bargaining position in the Doha round by making concessions in the FTAA negotiations. The United States, for instance, has stated that it will only cut its farm subsidies if Europe and others do too, as part of a global WTO agreement. So hopes of concluding a meaningful FTAA deal while Doha remains stalled are slim.

American officials suggest that concluding bilateral and regional deals puts pressure on the European Union, China, and other leading WTO members to negotiate in earnest, a strategy Zoellick dubs "competitive liberalization." "If some countries hide behind the false security of protectionism, the U.S. will work with those that believe true economic strength is achieved through openness," he has said. "The strategy is simple: The U.S. is spurring a competition in liberalization." Perhaps—if other countries were scared that the United States was going to corner their main export markets through sweetheart trade deals. But Zoellick's grab bag of small prospective pacts poses little threat to big players like Europe, especially since the EU has already signed its own bilateral and regional agreements with many countries.

ZOELLICK IS GUILTY of far worse than hype. The bigger danger is that the collapse of the Doha round will help trigger a lurch toward protectionism—with the United States leading the way. While governments are negotiating to free up trade, they are wary of giving in to the demands of protectionist interest groups that antagonize their negotiating partners and thus jeopardize chances of securing better export opportunities. But now that there is little hope of a WTO deal any time soon, governments will find it harder to resist pressures to limit imports. And history shows that, once one country acts to keep out foreign products, others are often tempted to retaliate, as happened during the 1930s.

For all its free-trade rhetoric, the United States looks set to act first. Even in the halcyon late '90s, when the economy was growing strongly and unemployment had virtually disappeared, support for free trade was weak among many Americans, as shown by a 2000 study by the Program on International Policy Attitudes, a Washington think tank.

Now that the economy has stumbled, the temptation to lash out at foreigners is much stronger. More than two million jobs have been lost since George W. Bush became president. America's goods-trade deficit rose to a whopping $538 billion in the year to August. With his reelection chances next year dependent in part on taking states like Pennsylvania and Michigan, which have been especially hard-hit by the downturn, Bush will be tempted to slap duties on imports deemed to threaten U.S. jobs. In fact, the White House has already employed protectionist measures for political gain. The administration approved an enormous

continued on page 27

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

POLITICAL REFORM IN SAUDI ARABIA: EXAMINING THE KINGDOM'S POLITICAL FUTURE

Will Saudi Arabia, One of the World's Great Oil Powers and Few Monarchies, Pursue Lasting Political Reform?

On October 2, 2003, *The New Republic* assembled a panel of experts to debate obstacles to political reform in Saudi Arabia. The royal family of Saudi Arabia, which is the Kingdom's ruling body and is particularly complex and fractious, stands at the center of domestic and international controversy. The country faces the added challenge of rebuilding a failing economy as an entire generation contends with massive unemployment. The panelists covered the host of issues confronting the Saudi Arabian government to discern America's best strategy for aiding political reform in a changing environment. Following is an edited transcript:

PANELISTS:

PATRICK CLAWSON
Deputy Director,
Washington Institute
for Near East Policy

CHARLES W. FREEMAN
Former U.S. Ambassador
to Saudi Arabia

FAWAZ GERGES
Christian A. Johnson Chair,
International Affairs
and Middle Eastern Studies,
Sarah Lawrence College

JEAN-FRANCOIS SEZNEC
Professor, Columbia
and Georgetown Universities

MODERATOR:

LAWRENCE F. KAPLAN
Senior Editor, *The New Republic*

LAWRENCE KAPLAN: A Time/CNN poll I saw a few weeks ago said that three of four Americans don't believe that America can trust the Saudis. There are some policymakers in this administration, in fact, who think we invaded the wrong country back in March. Needless to say, we won't be invading Saudi Arabia anytime soon, but back here on Planet Earth, there is talk of pressing the Saudis, however gently, to reform their political system. This in itself is news, because for decades Washington has held something of a tacit bargain with the Saudis. In exchange for basing rights and access to oil, we tended to keep mum about what goes on inside Saudi Arabia's borders. To discuss this timely, important topic, we have a distinguished panel of veteran Saudi watchers and scholars.

I'd like to kick off today's discussion by reference to an article in *The Washington Post*, which talks about Saudi Arabia exporting Wahhabism or Salafism, or whatever you would like to call it, to the United States. This intersects with the topic we're discussing today; namely, political reform in Saudi Arabia, because several American analysts — and we hear this often from pundits, particularly on television — talk about Saudi Arabia's Wahhabi theoretical base and identify Wahhabism as the most significant impediment to political reform. In all this talk of Wahhabism and Wahhabi ideology — is there anything here, or is this just Americans seizing onto a topic that doesn't quite define Saudi Arabia's political culture?

FAWAZ GERGES: While it's essential to focus on the alliance between the House of Saud and Wahhabism, it's a bit misleading to reduce the social structure of Saudi Arabia to that alone. In the eyes of most Saudis the birth of the Kingdom is synonymous with the birth of Islam. This is the first lesson we need to know.

As a result, many and most Saudis believe that their country has a unique role, which creates a kind of missionary zeal not just on the part of the ruling and the religious establishment, but of many Saudis, to strut this early form of Islam that was born and nourished in the Kingdom. If we tend to focus on the simplistic notion that there are two basic lay constituencies — the ruling establishment and the Wahhabi conservative establishment — I think we misunderstand the complex structure of the Kingdom itself.

PATRICK CLAWSON: While it may be that many people find that Saudi Arabia has a unique place in Islam, it does not necessarily mean that the Saudi royal family is regarded as being uniquely well qualified to be the ones leading the country.

CHARLES W. FREEMAN: Unspoken in this morning's *Washington Post* article is every

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

law enforcement agency in the United States running around questioning the adherents to a particular strain of religion. What underlies that is the perception in the United States that Wahhabism equals terrorism. There is no evidence for that.

The principal crisis in Saudi Arabia is a fiscal crisis. The state cannot continue to sustain itself without taxes, and the principal issue in reform is the crown prince repeatedly saying to people, no representation without taxation. It's fine if you want to have a representative form of government, but you will have to pay taxes. Would all in favor of paying taxes please raise their hands? And nobody does.

One of the reasons they don't is that this particular religious establishment in Saudi Arabia condemns taxes as against the will of God, and that is a fundamental obstacle to political transformation that I think must occur.

JEAN-FRANCOIS SEZNEC: On the one side, you have the old conservatives who have a lot of power because of their former alliance with the royal family, who call themselves the muwahhidun, [or] unitarians; here we call them the Wahhabis. Next to that, you have the other half of the country, which is made of liberals, who view themselves as being just as religious as the old religious people. Today in Saudi Arabia it's the liberals who are pushing political reforms.

There is an overlay over this battle between the conservatives and the liberals, and this overlay is the battle within the royal family for succession. The liberals are trying to convince Abdullah, who is the crown prince and the man more or less in power in this time, to go their way and liberalize and provide elections. Naif has been throwing his weight around to control the liberals and kick the liberal writers in the press out of their jobs. It's interesting knowing that a good bit of the press is controlled by [Governor of Riyadh] Prince Salman, who is [Naif's] full brother, so you can see that there is very much of a family feud there, which is really slowing down reforms. As long as Abdullah is not king, there will be no reforms in the Kingdom. So the battle really is not so much on Wahhabism or conservatism in the country.

GERGES: The House of Saud has used religion as a legitimizing device for more than a hundred years in order to maintain domestic peace at home and in order to maintain its particular role in the larger world. Saudi Arabia has contributed millions of dollars, if not hundreds of millions of dollars, to various religious causes and groups, as *The Washington Post* article says. I have done considerable research on Islamist movements, both mainstream and militant, and I was astonished by the extent of the links between the various groups. Almost everyone I interviewed either worked or traveled or received aid from the Kingdom. Eighty percent of books published in Egypt are religious books, and almost 80 percent of that 80 percent of books are supported and financed by Saudi Arabia. This is point one.

Point two: It's misleading — and I think it's very false and dangerous — to argue that the royal family consciously supports, harbors or finances terrorism. Yet, the truth is some American critics, some conservative hardliners, have already found the royal family guilty without even a proper and fair trial.

Charles W. Freeman
"IT WAS MORE THAN BENIGN NEGLECT THAT LED TO EXTREME RELIGIOUS VIEWS AND PRACTICES."

If you read carefully what the leftists and militant Islamists in the Arab world say, the royal family is a traitor to the faith, the royal family has sold out, the royal family basically serves as a front for American capitalism and globalization and American foreign policy. The belief is that toppling the royal family would present the first nail in the coffin of the American empire in the Muslim world — the first step to independence. Conservative hardliners say that [the royal family] is a traitor, a client who stabbed its master in the back. From this perspective, if you topple the royal family, it would represent the first nail in the coffin of extremism, and it would lay the foundation for democracy in the larger Muslim world.

CLAWSON: The ways in which the royal family encourages radical extremism — religious radical extremism directed against the West — are primarily by encouraging those radical extremists at home and then discouraging them from attacking the regime at home, but attacking instead targets elsewhere, which ends up being us.

... Is the Saudi government financing terrorism? Well, it's not like they're passing money to those who are going to be bombing targets in the United States, but they're certainly creating the right conditions for that to happen by not addressing the social problems of their country.

But the solution to this problem is not some overthrow of the Saudi regime, which would only empower the religious extremists who are now organized to replace the Saudi regime. The solution instead is to encourage reform, and by encouraging reform and by opening up the Saudi system, we undoubtedly would strengthen the Saudi royal family. And in that way, I think that our interests in countering terrorism are entirely compatible with the interests of the Saudi royal family. A similar thing can happen on the political front, and it would be in our interest to encourage stable change and not dramatic change.

FREEMAN: I don't know what country Patrick is talking about when he speaks of the encouragement of religiosity. ... The crown prince has vigorously campaigned and made numerous statements against extremism in the religious establishment, and some of the extremists are in jail. So whatever might have happened at the beginning of the '80s in a defensive reaction to the Shah of Iran's failed revolution from the top, is not descriptive of what is happening now.

As for the relationship of the royal family to terrorism, first of all, as several pointed out, it beggars the imagination to consider that the Saudi royal family, which is not notably kind to dissidents, would suddenly look the other way and facilitate the growth of the only externally based terrorist movement that is effective in conducting terrorist operations in Saudi Arabia and against members of the royal family. It just doesn't make sense.

SEZNEC: We're on the slippery slope of going into the Palestinian-Israeli issues here, and that's going to take us pretty far. So perhaps we should go on now.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It's very difficult to defend the royal family. And I find myself having criticized and in fact taken to court some members of the royal families in Riyadh because I really didn't like their business attitudes and being threatened by them personally. ... But nevertheless, I cannot see the logic of the royal family actively supporting terrorism.

I think the royal family has perhaps encouraged the more conservative Wahhabi movements, which the young members of those movements have in turn hijacked because, seeing no change in the world and being very upset with the policies of the United States and the alliance between the Saudis and the Saudi family and the United States, they have seen violence as their only way to express their opinions.

The biggest problem of Saudi Arabia today is not so much the royal family. The biggest problem is unemployment of the young Saudis. Eighteen percent — and I'm just talking about the males here — 18 percent of the males between 20 and 25 are unemployed, and this is really a time bomb. It's a lost generation, because by the time the reforms take place, it's going to take almost a generation. The issue is even worse for young females who are mostly educated and who are looking for jobs; their unemployment rate — given by the Saudi Minister of Economy — is about 25 or 30 percent.

The problem is we have a royal family that is very large and, in many cases, extremely corrupt. This family has to be controlled by whoever becomes king and he has to be very strong to control not so much the population, but his own family. Because once he controls his own family, then he can get the country moving and the reforms taking place.

FREEMAN: In the 1980s, it was more than benign neglect that led to the growth of the extreme religious views and practices in Saudi Arabia. It was a direct reaction to two things: first, the fall of the Shah, and second, the U.S.-Saudi joint enterprise in Afghanistan, which used religion as the banner with which to defeat godless communism and Soviet imperialism successfully, ultimately bringing down the Soviet Union. There was active encouragement of religious involvement in politics, and no good deed goes unpunished.

The position of the royal family in Saudi society is a major problem. The family is now too large. Its senior members are engaged in gridlock rather than constructive discussion and resolution of issues. One of the questions that any political reform in Saudi Arabia must address is, even though you are a descendent of Abd al-Aziz, you cease to be entitled to state subsidies and privileges of being called Your Royal Highness.

GERGES: The socioeconomic context in Saudi Arabia, rather than the religious question, is the dominating issue in the country itself. And it's this socioeconomic context that really nourishes and sustains extremism. The only way out of this particular deadly embrace is to begin the process of arduous national institution building and

Patrick Clawson
"IT IS THE ROYAL FAMILY THAT IS THE KEY PROBLEM, NOT THE LIBERALS."

gradual opening up of the political system and integrating the rising social classes into the political sphere.

Jean-Francois mentioned the figure of 18 percent [unemployment]. The figures I have by the World Bank and the United Nations range between 25 percent and 30 percent unemployment among the youth, and this is why this particular constituency tends to be receptive to the religious hardliner's inflammatory rhetoric, and they become, you might say, willing recruits for various particular causes.

The question is, what will the royal family do in the meantime? Not only to reduce the degree of social upheaval in the country, but also to meet the demands and the expectations of the rising population, particularly the youth?

CLAWSON: ... What the Saudi royal family has been doing in thinking about its policy towards the religious establishment and its relationship with the religious establishment has been concentrating on the domestic problems that we have just heard about. And it is in that context that no, Ambassador Freeman, it doesn't beg of imagination.

It makes excellent sense that, faced with young men who do not have any way of improving their lives at home and a regime which is not going to be responsive to their demands, that the regime would encourage people to instead take their activism abroad and direct it at foreign targets. And that is precisely what we saw on September 11th. And no, this is not a policy of the 1980s. It's a policy of the 1990s, and it's a policy that to a disturbing extent continues today.

MODERATOR: Patrick and Fawaz, for all of your disagreements, it occurs to me that you both cast Saudi politics as something of a zero-sum game. That is, if we don't like the Saudi royal family, and to those in the United States who are saying maybe they should step aside, wait 'til we see the alternative. That is, it's either the Saudi royal family or the bin Ladens.

CLAWSON: Or slow reform. All four of us are in favor of slow reform politically, slow reform economically. I think we're all intensely aware of the dangers of too rapid reform, and I think we are all arguing that we have to push the Saudis for slow reform.

MODERATOR: Where exactly are the liberals in Saudi Arabia? How much of a force are they? Can we quantify them? I recall during the Cold War that it was either you deal with the government in power or you're going to be stuck with a much worse alternative. My question is, where do the liberals come into this process, and what are the mechanisms to empower Saudi liberals?

CLAWSON: Free press. If we see more of a free press, we see more of these kinds of petitions where people feel free to discuss these issues. ... A freer press [allows] a parliament to allow local elections and local politics, and you allow freer debate at the universities. Then you can see the liberals begin to organize and have more of a say in society. And then you'll see a lot of the Islamists take more reasonable positions.

SEZNEC: Who are the liberals? They are most of the big merchant families in the Kingdom, especially on the west coast in Jiddah.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

They're intellectuals, the educated folks, and basically it is not a majority of the people.

We should push for the reform, but we have to be careful because the United States today is extremely disliked in Saudi Arabia by everyone, from the taxi driver to the prince, because of what they perceive as our policy in Palestine and Israel and our policies in Iraq. So any kind of support we give officially to the liberals will backfire against the liberals, and that's the biggest problem — [that] they are viewed as the voice of America.

We can help in pushing for the Saudis joining the WTO [World Trade Organization] because the biggest advantage would be that WTO demands a transparency of the law.

FREEMAN: As I was listening to this discussion I realized there is a missing context. Let me try to provide this.

In 1989 when I moved to Saudi Arabia as ambassador, the Saudi Arabian welfare state was alive and well. That welfare state provided free medical care from cradle to grave. It provided free education from pre-primary through post-doctoral level, including a degree at Princeton rather than at King Saud University. It provided every graduate, male and female, with a $50,000 small business start-up grant upon graduation. Every Saudi male, upon reaching maturity, got a plot of land and an $80,000 interest-free construction loan to build a house. Electricity and water were essentially free and telephone service throughout the country was subsidized. Nobody had to work.

The Saudi government can no longer distribute largesse. Every welfare program has been trimmed, cut back, or eliminated. The standard of living now is one-fourth what it was in the 1980s. You cannot sustain a welfare state without taxation. You cannot address social problems without taxation. You cannot divorce government expenditure from revenue from the prosperity of society.

MODERATOR: I'm curious: Do you think America should adopt a more humble tone when talking about political reform in Saudi Arabia?

CLAWSON: No, not at all. In Ambassador Freeman's last discourse, what was missing was any discussion of the royal family as the beneficiaries of the welfare state and the stealers of billions and billions of dollars.

When Saudi Arabia's ambassador to the United States can acknowledge on national television that $50 billion has gone missing in the last 30 years due to corruption and say "so what?" about it, I think that says something to us about the scale by which the royal family has looted this country. And it is the royal family that is the key problem, not the liberals. It's not the liberals who are the principal beneficiaries of the welfare state; it's the billions and billions of dollars directed into the pockets of a relatively small number of royal princes.

GERGES: There are no quick fixes out there. Saudi Arabia has just begun to really implement a judicial system. If elections are to take place in many parts of the world, we know who are the dominant groups who basically will win elections. Islamists are the most organized, and they represent between 28 percent and 35 percent [of the population]. The liberals are basically disorganized and they don't have the structures, the organizations to put a major agenda for change across the board.

Fawaz Gerges
"YOU MUST CREATE A TRANSPARENT JUDICIAL SYSTEM. ... YOU MUST EMPOWER WOMEN."

In April 2003, a hundred politicians and academics sent a letter to senior princes, and that particular letter brilliantly summarized what needs to be done in order to counterbalance the conservative religious hardliners and empower the professional and liberal voices. First and foremost, they talked about halting the waste of public money — separating the interests of the royal household from that of the public interest.

Saudi Arabians, themselves, are basically calling for such reforms. They talk about the creation of a conference for the reconciliation and dialogue. And Crown Prince Abdullah did convene such a conference a few months ago, and in fact, [it was] the first time that the Shi'ite leadership was invited and substantively participated in that particular conference.

You must create a transparent judicial system, a legal structure. Nothing takes place without that in particular. You must empower women. We're talking about first steps, baby steps: abolishing restrictions on travel and preventing arrests without a trial, and most important of all, that particular letter in April 2003 called for the Saudi parliament to be elected, and that's really a major step. So we know what needs to be done. The question is, is the royal family willing to proceed with such creative and risk-taking steps?

SEZNEC: Just a small comment on the liberal issue. The last three petitions in the Kingdom in a row have been liberal petitions. And that's a step in the right direction, because in the past when there was a liberal petition, there would be conservative petition immediately to counter the other. This hasn't happened. Why? Because we're not talking about a democracy here; I'm sure Abdullah has decided that he was not going to listen to conservative petitions.

MODERATOR: Just to summarize a few points of agreement we had today. One is that all our panelists agreed that economics and demographics is as pressing a problem in Saudi Arabia, if not more pressing, than religion. We all agree that, if Saudi Arabia is to be reformed, it needs to be reformed slowly and not overnight, and that too much American pressure can certainly backfire. It's also fairly clear that reform is proceeding extremely slowly in any case. Finally, we have a regime that is seen by its population as a proxy of the United States, and that Americans see as intimately involved with terrorists — not an enviable spot to be in.

To view the complete transcript or a webcast from the event go to:
http://www.tnr.com/panel_saudi.mhtml

SPONSORED BY

THE PEOPLE OF SAUDI ARABIA
Allies Against Terrorism
www.saudiembassy.net

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

continued from page 22

farm-aid package worth $190 billion in subsidies over ten years. And, in March 2002, when Bush was riding high in the polls, he succumbed to pressure from America's steel industry and slapped emergency duties on foreign steel.

If at the height of his popularity Bush could not find the backbone to face down 160,000 steelworkers, he is hardly likely to resist the protectionist temptation now. China is already in the firing line. One in six jobs in America's manufacturing sector have been lost in the past three years—2.7 million in all. The powerful National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) argues that China is largely to blame. In a series of congressional testimonies and public events, the NAM has accused Beijing of gaining an unfair competitive advantage by keeping its currency, the yuan, pegged to the U.S. dollar at the same rate since 1994, making its exports artificially cheap and pricing U.S. imports out of its market. Pointing to China's $100-billion-per-year trade surplus with the United States, the NAM argues that Beijing should have let its currency rise against the dollar over the past nine years by as much as 40 percent. If the NAM can convince Zoellick's office that China's policy is unfairly harming U.S. exports, the United States could hit back with punitive tariffs on Chinese imports.

Congress is also in a China-bashing mood. Congress has held committee hearings to consider whether or not China manipulates its currency for commercial advantage. Senator Richard Durbin of Illinois and five other senators are co-sponsoring legislation that would levy a 27.5 percent tariff on imports from China unless it adjusts its exchange rate; similar measures have been proposed in the House. Democratic presidential candidates echo the protectionist noises. "We must reexamine our trade policies," says Howard Dean. "We can't allow some countries to subsidize exports, manipulate their currencies, or erect barriers to imports from the United States."

The administration is already swinging into action. President Bush has called for China to adopt a "monetary policy that is fair." On Bush's trip to Asia this week, White House officials announced that Chinese and American experts would study how Beijing could move toward a floating exchange rate. Treasury Secretary John Snow visited Beijing last month to demand that China abandon its dollar peg, let its currency float upward against the dollar, and lift its capital controls. The United States also secured limited support at September's meeting of finance ministers from the G7, the group of leading industrialized nations, for its position of pushing China to revalue. The G7 statement called for "more flexible exchange rates" to reduce global financial imbalances.

Such pressure on China could have disastrous consequences. One possibility is that, if China refuses to give in to America's demands, a trade war could erupt. Under the terms of China's entry into the WTO last year, the United States has broad discretion to slap emergency duties on Chinese imports deemed to be causing "market disruption," a clause the administration could invoke if China continues to refuse revaluation. Such protectionism would do the United States more harm than good. Higher duties on Chinese products would be a tax on American consumers and companies that rely on imports. The United States imported $103 billion from China over the past year; 27.5 percent duties would therefore be equivalent to a $28 billion tax hike on these imports. And, since many of these imports are made by the Chinese subsidiaries of U.S. firms, such protectionism would be particularly self-destructive.

Moreover, Beijing is unlikely to take any U.S. action lying down. Chinese leaders have reacted angrily to Snow's suggestions. And Beijing could do serious economic damage to the United States. If China, the second-largest buyer of U.S. Treasury bonds, sold off some of its vast holdings, it could force U.S. interest rates up, undermining the U.S. economic recovery. Beijing might also retaliate with sanctions against U.S. exports or by taking away U.S. companies' licenses to operate in the Chinese market, major blows for multinationals that view China as the world's biggest emerging market and export base. As Ronald Reagan's attacks in the 1980s on Japan showed, such commercial conflicts can quickly spiral out of control, seriously impeding trade. Indeed, according to a study by the Cato Institute, by the end of the Reagan years, one-quarter of U.S. imports were affected by trade restrictions.

A second scenario is that China caves in to U.S. pressure for a revaluation of its currency peg. This could be even more damaging—for the United States as well as China. A revaluation could harm China's economy, which has been one of the engines of global growth. Contrary to U.S. claims, the yuan is not obviously undervalued. Although China's trade surplus with the United States is huge, its surplus with the world as a whole fell to only $9 billion in the first eight months of the year—and is likely to shrink further as it opens its markets to foreign competition. Also, a revaluation could reduce the rate at which China's central bank accumulates currency reserves, much of which it has been investing in U.S. Treasury bonds. If China buys fewer Treasuries, U.S. interest rates could spike up, denting U.S. economic growth.

What's more, if China is bludgeoned into allowing the yuan to float, it would simultaneously have to open its weak financial markets. This could cause a financial crisis that might engulf the United States as well, since China's ramshackle financial system and near-bankrupt banks are still too weak to handle the instability of global capital markets. The White House appears to have forgotten the lessons of the late '90s Asian financial crisis, which almost plunged the world economy into recession. East Asian countries like Thailand that—under U.S. pressure—had opened up their underdeveloped capital markets prematurely suffered a devastating financial crisis, ruining many American investors who had bet on Asia and spreading turmoil to U.S. markets. At that time, China—thanks to its currency peg and capital controls—proved an oasis of stability. It is folly on a grand scale to risk a rerun of the late '90s by prizing open China's

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

capital markets when its financial system is still so weak.

Whatever happens with China, the Bush administration is playing with fire by aggressively seeking a weaker dollar. Already, global financial markets have reacted to the G7 statement on flexible exchange rates by driving the dollar down, causing U.S. interest rates to rise. Worse, the dollar's decline could turn into a rout if investors pull out of the United States and lose confidence in the dollar. If the U.S. currency crashed, investors, who have allowed the United States to maintain an enormous current account deficit by purchasing U.S. assets and equities, would require much higher returns to continue buying U.S. assets. U.S. interest rates would shoot up, and stock prices could plummet. Higher interest rates could bankrupt U.S. companies dependent on borrowing and cause others to cut investment. Unemployment would rise. Consumers, who have powered the U.S. economy for the past three years, would have to save more to pay off their debts and thus might spend less, further depressing the economy. U.S. demand for foreign products could collapse, since the weaker dollar would make them prohibitively expensive. Thus a U.S. recession could soon spread around the world.

EUROPE HAS SO far borne the brunt of the dollar's fall. The euro has risen by 40 percent against the U.S. currency since July 2001. At first, European policymakers welcomed the euro's rebound as a vote of confidence in the fledgling currency. But, now, they fret that its rise is stunting EU exports and economic growth. German business groups have warned that, if the euro moves "significantly above" $1.20 per euro, it would harm German exports. Indeed, if the euro rises too far too fast and Paris and Berlin think the United States is gaining an unfair competitive advantage, the European Union could be tempted to hit back at the United States.

The European Commission, which handles trade policy for the EU's 15 member states, has powerful weapons. The European Union has already won WTO authorization to impose retaliatory sanctions on U.S. imports in several important cases. By far the biggest case is that of America's foreign sales corporations (FSCs), tax breaks for U.S.-based exporters that the WTO deems an illegal export subsidy. So far, the European Union has not imposed these retaliatory sanctions, in part because Brussels did not want to antagonize Washington while the new WTO round was being negotiated. Now that the Doha round is on ice, the European Union may feel more inclined to impose sanctions, especially if it feels provoked by U.S. actions on the dollar.

This could spark an enormous trade war. In the case of FSCs alone, the European Union is entitled to slap 100 percent duties on $4 billion of U.S. imports, and Europe has already drawn up a hit list of 1,800 U.S. products. President Bush's tariffs on foreign steel also infuriate Europe. The WTO has ruled the tariffs illegal, but the United States has appealed. If the WTO's appeals court confirms the initial verdict against the United States, America could be faced with more retaliatory sanctions from Europe.

Such a tit-for-tat battle could easily escalate. The United States also has a big WTO grievance with Europe: the EU's failure to approve any new genetically modified crops since 1998, which the Bush administration views as covert protectionism. Washington initiated WTO proceedings against the European Union on genetically modified crops in May. If the WTO finds in America's favor, the United States would be entitled to hit back against European exports. Even more worryingly, France and other EU countries may use the Cancún debacle as a pretext for reversing the EU farm-subsidy reforms announced in June. This would enrage Washington and could provoke a battery of new disputes once the "peace clause," under which countries agree not to challenge each other's farm-support schemes at the WTO, expires at the end of the year.

SUCH DISPUTES COULD not only damage political and economic relations between Washington and Brussels; they could also fatally undermine the WTO, which relies on cooperation between the United States and Europe. The failure in Cancún raises serious questions about whether the WTO can still function effectively, and, if the United States and the European Union remain at each other's throats, the organization might never recover. If it cannot, prospects for free trade are grim, since it is under the WTO aegis that the most recent major multilateral trade gains, which helped usher in global growth in the '90s, have been made. Worse, if American policymakers begin to feel that the WTO is primarily a rod with which the European Union and others can beat it, the United States might even consider withdrawing from the organization, as voices in Congress periodically propose.

Fortunately, the WTO is not dead yet. Even so, the next year or two will still pose a serious challenge. The big issue is how to deal with America's vast trade gap, which is an indicator of larger problem—the world economy is dangerously unbalanced. Americans are living beyond their means, while the Europeans and Japanese are not spending enough. The U.S. current account deficit is swelling to record highs. To sustain its economic growth, the United States needs to borrow some $2 billion extra from foreigners every working day. This is clearly unsustainable. At some point, either Americans will reduce their borrowing or foreigners will get scared and stop lending. Were this shift to happen suddenly, jacking up U.S. interest rates, America's economy would plunge into recession, dragging the rest of the world down with it.

What is needed, then, is faster growth in the rest of the world. This would boost U.S. exports, reducing the country's borrowing needs. And it would allow Americans to start to pay off some of their huge debts without their belt-tightening pushing the economy into recession. One way to achieve this is to lower interest rates and run higher budget deficits in other major economies. Another is to free up world trade. Not much chance of that now. ■

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Defending the media on Iraq.

Off Message

BY JOSHUA HAMMER

BAGHDAD, IRAQ

When Commerce Secretary Don Evans flew into Baghdad for a brief tour last week, the Bush administration made the most of his visit. In a series of stage-managed appearances, Evans inspected a bundle of newly minted dinars and praised two boys he'd spotted selling soft drinks as an example of the new businesses that have sprung up here.

But, despite Evans's cheery assessment, the media paid little attention. Just after Evans left town, Shia in Karbala gunned down three American soldiers in a ten-hour firefight. On Saturday, almost every U.S. newspaper carried the conflict on the front page. "CLASH WITH SHIITES AND BOMB ATTACK LEAVE 4 G.I.'S DEAD," ran the lead story in *The New York Times*. *The Washington Post*'s headline included a grim milestone: "3 SOLDIERS KILLED IN IRAQI CITY; BOMB CLAIMS A FOURTH; POSTWAR TOLL PASSES 100." Evans's story, meanwhile, ran on the inside pages.

For the Bush administration, it was yet another example of the villainy of the press. In recent weeks, a chorus of critics ranging from Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld to occupation leader L. Paul Bremer have lambasted the media for harping on bad news in Iraq and ignoring coalition forces' successes. "Sometimes it's hard to tell it when you listen to the filter. We're making good progress," President Bush said last week. According to these critics, the reasons for "biased" news coverage range from the press corps's failure to venture out of Baghdad to see the progress in the hinterlands, to an ideological hatred of the administration, to what Bremer recently termed a "structural defect of a free press"—an instinct to dwell on violence. Some administration officials even accuse the press of undermining America's mission in Iraq by providing psychological succor to enemy forces and eroding domestic support for the occupation. Two weeks ago, the American Enterprise Institute held a symposium whose tone captured the animosity festering in conservative circles. The synopsis of the panel discussion said it all: "Is the Bush administration losing control of the situation on the ground, or is the media transforming a military victory into a defeat in the public mind?"

Are journalists predisposed to find failure in Iraq? As a correspondent who spent part of the past six months reporting from Iraq, I know I wasn't. In fact, when I arrived in Baghdad in mid-August, I was pleasantly surprised to discover how much had improved from my previous visit immediately after the war. Shops and restaurants were crowded in the Karrada neighborhood around my hotel. The pervasive fear of looting was gone. Also gone were the half-mile-long lines in front of gas stations that I'd encountered before. Baghdad's streets were cleaner, safer, and more vibrant. Compared with the anarchic wreck of April and May, or with the sullen, oppressive metropolis of the Saddam Hussein era, I found that, on balance, Baghdad appeared on the road to recovery.

Then, on August 19, another reality struck. I had just returned to my hotel room when I received word of an explosion at the U.N. headquarters. Rushing across town, I found the compound blocked by American troops, who acknowledged there had been "massive casualties." Twenty-two people, including U.N. Special Envoy Sergio Vieira de Mello, died in the wreckage that afternoon. With them, any confidence that Iraq was normalizing perished. As I watched shell-shocked survivors stumble out of the smoking compound, their faces and clothing streaked with blood, I found myself struggling to make sense of the two realities I'd witnessed here: the economic boom in Karrada and the terror strike in the heart of Baghdad.

Bremer tried to portray the U.N. tragedy as a bump in the road, insisting that reconstruction was proceeding smoothly. And, in general, the Bush administration has spoken about security and reconstruction as if they are two separate stories, with the press ignoring the latter. In fact, reconstruction depends on security, and the lack of security is sabotaging the rebuilding effort—by driving skilled people out of Iraq, scaring away investors, and turning Iraqis against the occupation. Hours after the attack at the U.N. headquarters, U.N. experts in postwar reconstruction were fleeing Iraq. One member of de Mello's team told me he was returning to Geneva and doubted he'd ever be back. He predicted the U.N. mission wouldn't recover: "Who the hell would want to come and work here?"

The U.N. bombing was followed in rapid succession by a car bombing in Najaf that killed more than 80 people and a second suicide attack near U.N. headquarters that injured 20 people. In the aftermath of the attacks, Secretary-General Kofi Annan scaled down the U.N. mission from 400 foreign nationals to a skeleton staff of 35, robbing Iraq of more experts with years of experience in nation-building. In stark contrast to staffers of the Coalition Provisional Administration, most of whom have little experience outside the United States, nearly all the U.N. officials had cut their teeth in war-torn countries like East Timor. Take just one example: David Marshall, a Harvard-trained attorney charged with rebuilding Iraq's justice system. Marshall had spent years doing the same work in Sierra Leone, Kosovo, and Afghanistan; now fear has driven him from Iraq. The coalition legal team trying to reform Iraq's judicial quagmire could no doubt have

Joshua Hammer is Newsweek*'s Jerusalem bureau chief and the author of* A Season in Bethlehem: Unholy War in a Sacred Place, *published by Free Press/Simon and Schuster.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

benefited from Marshall's expertise.

Indeed, many specific postwar needs are going unfulfilled as aid groups flee. In recent months, the International Committee of the Red Cross reduced its foreign workforce in Iraq from 130 to 30. The French nongovernment organization Handicap International pulled its entire international staff out of Iraq, and the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees and UNICEF currently have no foreign staff in the country. At a meeting in New York with U.N. representatives last week, Denis Caillaux, secretary-general of CARE International, said that concerns about security were making it nearly impossible for his organization to carry out its responsibility, providing clean water to more than five million Iraqis. "As long as ordinary civilians—including humanitarians trying to assist them—are not able to go about their basic work, any efforts at reconstruction in the medium and long term will be seriously impeded," Caillaux said.

The security situation has also had a chilling effect on foreign investment. Small Iraqi businesses have bloomed since Saddam's fall, but Washington was counting on a flood of foreign capital to help the economy recover. Yet, with carjackers lurking on the road to Amman, anti-aircraft missiles on sale in Iraqi markets, and car bombs detonating with regularity, few investors are setting up shop in Iraq. Iraq's crippled oil industry needs an estimated $7 billion to rehabilitate production and refineries, but Oil Ministry officials admit that instability has scared off potential investors, including corporate giants like Exxon. And even the Coalition Provisional Authority admitted in mid-September that the process of selling off 153 of 200 state-owned companies to private investors could take five years, in part because of investors' wariness. The press isn't overplaying the security situation in Iraq; it's the single biggest challenge facing the country's reconstruction.

The White House is also playing blame-the-messenger on coverage of American casualties. True, most of these have taken place in a small area, the Sunni triangle west of Baghdad. Consequently, the Pentagon has dismissed the roughly 17 attacks per day and the half-dozen deaths per week as "militarily insignificant." That's probably correct—the resisters are not likely to beat the U.S. Army. But such a blithe assessment ignores the psychological impact of casualties. The guerrilla campaign has clearly dampened troop morale. According to a recent poll by the U.S. military newspaper *Stars and Stripes* reported in the *Los Angeles Times*, half of the 1,939 troops responding said morale in their units was low or very low. This slump in morale has contributed to heavy-handed house-to-house searches and panicky retaliatory fire that kills civilians, which stirs resentment and strengthens support for insurgents.

What's more, the violence, which may be spreading to Shia areas (witness the gunfight this week between Shia radicals and American troops), has unhinged Washington's efforts to bring in international troops. In Turkey, young conscripts are now restive about the prospect of being dispatched to Iraq. "You cannot send compulsory, conscripted soldiers outside your national territory," Major General Riza Kocukoglu, a veteran of 43 years in the Turkish military, told *The Christian Science Monitor* last week. "Even the American and British soldiers there are very demoralized." Worse, many countries have refused to commit troops altogether. Their reluctance to enter the fray will keep Americans shouldering the burden, perpetuating perceptions of the United States as an occupation force. "The Bush administration keeps confusing the volume of violence with the importance of [the] violence," says Vivienne Walt, who reported in Iraq for *The Boston Globe* and *Time*. "Of course, only a tiny minority is involved in guerrilla activity, but it's hugely important, because it can undercut everything that is going on for the 99.9 percent of people."

Sometimes even the "good news" in Iraq is less than meets the eye. Some American officials have criticized what they call "poor" news coverage of the U.S. rehabilitation of 1,000 Iraqi schools. Republican Senator Larry Craig of Idaho said he'd only learned about the program after arriving in Iraq in early October as part of a congressional delegation. In fact, according to the Associated Press (AP), there was plenty of coverage of the school reopenings on both television and in print. And, as the AP points out, the schools needed the rehabilitation primarily because they'd been damaged during the looting following the U.S. military's entry into Baghdad in April. Moreover, many schools in the south haven't been renovated, according to reporters who've visited them.

Many other so-called success stories look less impressive when held under scrutiny. Hospitals have been reopened, but, according to Iraqi doctors, the distribution of medicine is worse than it was before the war. The United States boasts of completing 15,000 construction projects, but many of them, according to aid workers, are cheap building repairs or "quick fixes" of battered sewage, water, and electricity systems. On a recent tour of Baghdad, Bremer pointed out reopened shops and told reporters that "the wheels of commerce are turning." In reality, according to Iraq's Labor Ministry, more than 70 percent of Iraqis are unemployed. Iraq's highly touted, new 40,000-man-strong police force is also less than it's cracked up to be. Although few dispute that the new cops mean well, they lack phones, squad cars, protective gear, computers, and precision weapons; American law enforcement sources say privately that they don't have anywhere near enough expertise to handle serious investigations.

ALL THIS IS not to say that Bush isn't partly right. There's a natural tendency in the media to give bad news top billing. Bombings and ambushes sell newspapers, and their prominent play can give a distorted impression of widespread chaos. Walt's September 12 report on the accidental killings of eight Iraqi policemen by American troops was featured on page one of *The Boston Globe*; a few weeks later, her long, nuanced story on improvements in the Iraqi educational system was

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

buried inside the paper. But these journalistic priorities aren't unique to Iraq. Newspapers invariably place stories about suicide bombings in Israel on page one, conveying the impression that Israel is a highly dangerous place. It isn't: Suicide bombings have killed about 400 Israelis during the past three years, while automobile accidents have killed roughly four times as many. But few people question the media attention paid to suicide attacks in Israel because of their far-reaching consequences—the devastating effect on the region's economy and on the future of the Middle East. Since violence in Iraq, if it leads to U.S. forces leaving the country, could have a similarly large impact on the region's economy and politics, why shouldn't it be given top billing as well?

The media's relentless scrutiny of violence in Iraq is also the result of another factor: the often clumsy efforts by the Bush administration to stage-manage news. On a day just after the fall of Saddam, when government ministries were still burning in Baghdad, Lieutenant General David McKiernan, commander of ground forces, was asked at a press conference about looting and arson in the capital. He insisted that every Iraqi he had encountered had told him things were better and thanked him. "But this is a society that was ruled by a despotic authority figure," says Christine Spolar of the *Chicago Tribune*. "Do you think that anybody would tell McKiernan, who had just captured Baghdad, anything else but 'thank you'?" The military's spin has gotten worse. About a month ago, the U.S. Central Command website deleted all mention of coalition deaths from its homepage, and this week the White House banned media coverage of returning coffins from Iraq. Then there were the 500 letters from Iraq-based soldiers that appeared in hometown newspapers praising progress in Iraq. The letters were nearly identical, except for the signatures—a lame p.r. effort devised by the military.

In Baghdad, meanwhile, reporters are subjected to a twenty-first-century version of Saigon's five o'clock follies: At the Baghdad Conference Center, Bremer and his generals offer relentlessly upbeat assessments. Yet just getting to these press conferences requires running a security gauntlet. Reporters must pass through four checkpoints and submit to ID inspections, frisking, and metal detectors. The U.S. government's whitewash of such unpleasant realities, and its refusal to confront the deaths of soldiers and the threat of terrorism, invites a more aggressive approach from the press. "Every single time they talk to media, they gloss over the bad news; they refuse to confront it head-on," says Walt. "Any journalist worth his or her salt is going to spend the other six days a week debunking the rosy picture."

Then there's Rumsfeld's charge that journalists aren't getting out of Baghdad to see the rest of the country. "The bulk of the journalists are in Baghdad. . . . They have facilities, hotels, and connections with their home offices," the Defense secretary complained at a recent Senate hearing. "So we've not had many takers on [the military] embedding program, which still exists and is available." True, few journalists avail themselves of the embedding program now, but that's because they're no longer dependent on the U.S. military to get around, and they don't like to be spoon-fed information. It's also true that physical discomfort can help keep reporters confined to Baghdad: During the terrible August heat, most of us weren't eager to escape from our air-conditioned hotel rooms. Insecurity on the roads remains a problem, and travelers run the risk of being robbed when they venture into the boondocks.

However, most big news organizations, including *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *Newsweek*, keep two or more correspondents in Iraq and encourage at least one to travel outside Baghdad as often as possible. During my first five-week trip to Iraq, I began my coverage in Basra, spent ten days in Najaf, put in a one-week stint in Baghdad, then finished the trip with a five-day swing through Mosul, Irbil, and Kirkuk. And the reconstruction process is not necessarily proceeding any faster outside Baghdad. In Shia areas, the growing tension and violence between the followers of radical clerics and the United States is scaring off aid workers there as well. In Basra, in the south, the *Los Angeles Times* reported this week, "occupation authorities say the absence of the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees has slowed the return of an estimated 400,000 Iraqis." In the north, meanwhile, violence between Kurds and Sunnis is rising. The fact remains, however, that Baghdad is the nerve center of the country, the economic capital and seat of government. What happens in Baghdad determines the fate of the entire country, and journalists have to pay close attention to the capital.

THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION'S attacks against the press have become strikingly reminiscent of the criticism I heard as a correspondent in Somalia ten years ago. At the time, U.S. and U.N. forces, having waded into a nation-building effort for which they were woefully unprepared, were engaged in an increasingly violent search for the fugitive warlord Mohamed Farah Aidid. Then, too, foreign correspondents were summoned to regular briefings by military spokesmen, who painted a rosy picture of the "progress" being made. Retired U.S. Admiral Jonathan Howe, the U.N. mission leader in Somalia, regularly touted a shaky exercise in democracy called the Transitional National Council and chided journalists for focusing on the negatives, such as a worsening guerrilla war that was claiming the lives of a half-dozen U.S. troops each week. Then, too, we were urged to leave the chaotic capital and see for ourselves improvements in the hinterlands.

The journalists refused to listen. Instead, they focused, much to Howe's annoyance, on the futile and bloody pursuit of Aidid, a hunt that culminated in the October 1993 battle that killed 18 American soldiers and led to the U.S. withdrawal. Iraq is certainly not Somalia. It may even be on the road to recovery. But, as long as American soldiers and Iraqis keep dying there, we'll put the story on page one. And for good reason. ■

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOOKS & THE ARTS

STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Dissenting Again

CLINT EASTWOOD'S LATEST film, **MYSTIC RIVER**, which he directed but does not appear in, has been greeted with rhapsodies that dim the dithyrambs about his *Unforgiven* (1992). I dissented about the earlier film, and I dissent in some measure about the new one, but *Mystic River* has a unique distinction. It is the first picture I know whose path seems to have been cleared by a disparate television series.

The screenplay, derived by Brian Helgeland from a Dennis Lehane novel, is like the first half of a *Law & Order* script expanded to two hours. In that first half, as millions know, two detectives unravel a crime until suspects can be arrested. The chief difference between this show and countless other crime shows is that its revelations are not common mystery stuff: they deal with unfamiliar motives, strange relationships, oppressive legacies. The secret of the series's success, I'd say, is its intelligent pursuit of *bizarrerie*.

No devotee of that television show is going to be disappointed by *Mystic River*. At the start, three boys of about eleven are playing street hockey in an outlying part of Boston, a district lined with frame houses. Accidentally the hockey ball rolls into a sewer. In search of further fun, the boys then scratch their names on a patch of new cement: Jimmy, Sean, and—almost—Dave. Before Dave can finish, a car pulls up. An ostensible detective summons him and puts him in the car. (We sense at once that the cement will be seen through the years with the unfinished third name hardened.) There is another man in the car, and they take Dave off to a lonely house where they abuse him sexually until, after four days, he escapes. (The second abuser wears a ring with a cross on it and has a cross around his neck. A reference to recent Massachusetts scandals?)

Some thirty years are then smoothly elided. Jimmy, who now runs a convenience store in the old neighborhood, is an ex-con. Sean is now a detective. (A faint echo of the contrast between two other boyhood pals seen later, James Cagney and Pat O'Brien in *Angels With Dirty Faces*.) Dave, who is married and has a small son, is "marginally employed." Sean has not been close to the other two through the years, but a crime re-unites them all. That crime is the murder of Jimmy's nineteen-year-old daughter Katie. Assigned to the case are Sean and his partner. Investigating this crime means that the detectives explore the past and the resulting present.

Gripping enough, as a yarn. Admittedly my dissent has as much to do with the film's reception as with the film itself. The term "tragedy" has been liberally applied to this picture, sometimes with journalistic glibness but sometimes with classic intent. This strikes me as an aggrandizement. There is no hubris in the film, no tragic flaw of character, none of the enlightenment or scope of true tragedy. The whole piece moves forward, not to tragedy but to pathos: the belated effect of a childhood injury and an angry vulnerability to misinformation. Put aside the swollen terms and *Mystic River* is little more than the distended first half of a twisty, dark *Law & Order* script. It even finishes, as usual in the series, with a malefactor who ought to come to trial in the (missing) second half.

No question, however, that Eastwood made the picture with an agreeably sure, experienced hand. He wrote the score, which has the courage to begin with a few piano doodlings before it waxes orchestral. His directing is clean, unobtrusive, empathic. One of his key achievements is his distillation of the neighborhood, a back-porch, lower-middle-class community. Two less adroit touches jar the directing. Eastwood intercuts the police discovery of Katie's murder with the First Communion of her younger sister, a flat-footed irony. The patriotic parade at the end is used, like the glimpse of the flag in *Unforgiven*, as a dry comment, but here it is blatant.

Most of the cast weave the film's fabric with truth. Tim Robbins, often admired for his light touch, plays the comparatively slow-witted Dave with respectful affection. Kevin Bacon, as Sean, shows again his mastery of minimalist realism. He never does too much or too little, and he always suggests more than we see or hear. (The screenplay gives him marital troubles, an arrantly superfluous attempt to deepen his character.) Laurence Fishburne plays Sean's partner without trying to score points: he just presents the man. In *Unforgiven* Eastwood drew an unusually vital performance from a young actor named Jaimz Woolvett. Here he gets a vital performance from the young Thomas Guiry, who plays the dead girl's boyfriend. The two prominent women in the picture, Laura Linney and Marcia Gay Harden, are outstandingly gifted. Linney keeps her last speech in mind throughout her role, a speech in which she virtually wreathes herself like a serpent around Jimmy when he feels shattered. Harden disdains triteness as she plays a woman who cries a lot.

But, for me, there is a burr in the acting fabric—the man who has been most ecstatically praised. As Jimmy, Sean Penn has the widest-ranging role, from manic anger to stoic grief, so he gets the greatest chance to impress. But once again, as in all his films, Penn comes on as an actor. Whatever the character's clothes, setting, vocation, Penn is always an actor. It isn't hamminess, it's more subtle—the feeling that he is there to wring our withers and all we have to do is wait. He is closest to verity in his quieter moments, when he lets his striking aquiline face work for him. But when he heats up, in fury or in grief, I always feel that he has flicked on a switch. Imagine a younger Robert De Niro as Jimmy, and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

you can feel the surge from within that would spill forth at the outburst. Not with Penn. He delivers the necessary emotion with a kind of pride in his accomplishment. Another way to put it is that Penn's outbursts seem a nightclub comic's mimicking of Penn's outbursts.

Through Eastwood's long career he has been focused, most of the time, on growth. He began with a variety of beginnings. (I once saw him do a dance act in an Italian film.) Now—and quite unfairly when we remember *The Bridges of Madison County*—he has become the Shiva of American film, the god of violence. That very fact helps to explain the ovations for *Unforgiven* and *Mystic River*. The ecstasies suggest that there is an eagerness for this man's coronation, for screen apotheoses of his chief screen activity. Thus we are allowed to think that the Dirty Harry and Western pistolings are exalted, sublimated, by these bronzings of violence. ■

Zadie Smith

"The Limited Circle Is Pure"

Franz Kafka versus the novel.

KAFKA IS THE NOVEL'S bad conscience. His work demonstrates a purity of intention, a precision of language, and a level of metaphysical commitment that the novel partially comprehends but is unable to replicate without, in the process, ceasing to be a novel at all. Consequently, Kafka makes novelists nervous. He doesn't seem to write like the rest of us. Either he is too good for the novel or the novel is not quite good enough for him—whichever it is, his imitators are very few.

Now, why is that? Where *are* Kafka's descendants? Only a handful—Borges, W. G. Sebald, Thomas Bernhard—have successfully "channeled" the Kafkaesque in any meaningful way. The result has been queer. His influence seems to cause a mutation in the recipient, metamorphosing the novel into something closer to a meditation, a fantastical historiography, an essay, a parable. What is it about Kafka's lessons for the novel that cannot be contained within the novel in the form as we have come to know it? How does Kafka lead novelists away from the novel?

Clearly, the intentions of most novels are not Kafka's intentions. The American writer Wallace Stegner tells us that "if fiction isn't people it is nothing," and this is a usefully succinct version of the novel's story about itself, as a form. By this account, the novel's achievement is to offer us so many "splinters" of consciousness, so many intimate portraits of people. The complexity and the psychological depth of these portraits—Anna Karenina, David Copperfield, Madame Bovary, Herzog, Holden Caulfield, and on and on—perform a service of variousness. Singularly, they are that interior communication with human otherness that Aristotle thought essential to our ethical development. Collectively, as "Literature," they are the description of a struggle against those more dogmatic and therefore deceitful versions of self generated by church, by state, by ourselves at our weakest, and now by our rapacious televisions.

At its most metaphysical, the novel might go as far as to investigate how selves are made, their superficial unity and hidden fragmentation, as Virginia Woolf did; or it might investigate the extreme porousness of certain borders between self and world, as James Joyce did. But when it comes to a discussion of—as Kafka put it—"the impossibility of being alive," well, the novelist cannot go quite as far as this. Novelists as a breed are broadly Hegelian: they assume at least some kind of rational relationship between the individual and the world. Then they proceed accordingly, unpacking their intimate vision of that relationship, assonant or dissonant depending on their temperaments. Kafka is the exception. He has no interest in psychology, not as something that individuates our tastes, desires, needs, opinions. Only the first half of that fetishistic modern word "lifestyle" could mean anything to Kafka. The novelist's question "What does he *do* with his life?" is made strange in Kafka's parabolic world, where "life" is not a fact but a transitive state; not something one could do things with but rather a process (*Der Prozess* is the title of *The Trial* in the original) to which we submit. Kafka's question is harder to listen to and harder to answer: "Is it possible to be alive?"

Most novelists are just not up for these kinds of ontological shenanigans. As a rule they are—as surely everyone has noticed by now—intuitive people rather than truly intellectual. It would be comforting, then, for novelists to call Kafka a philosopher, or a theologian, and thus strip him of any further power to trouble our consciences. But Kafka was no philosopher, no theologian. Literature was, or so he believed, his entire existence and his life's work. In a letter to his first fiancée, Felice Bauer, whom he would leave for this very reason (he was in the habit of leaving chicks for books), he explained: "I *am* literature." If this were true, of course, we could not pick out five practitioners of literature in the past five hundred years. But Kafka seems to mean something very different by "literature" than the rest of us mean.

I am literature! Bloody *hell*. Fearing the truth of this statement, novelists shrink from Kafka. Like the cast of a gaudy musical, they hide in the wings, looking on nervously at this solitary man who, with less to work with than even his beloved Yiddish actors—no props, no costume, not a scrap of makeup—steps onto the floodlit stage. Confronted with this purity, the humbled novelist cannot help but think of Mary McCarthy's famous put-down of Lillian Hellman ("Everything she writes is a lie, including

Zadie Smith is the author of WHITE TEETH *and* THE AUTOGRAPH MAN *(Random House). She is currently a visiting lecturer at Harvard University.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

'and' and 'the' ") and reflect that here, in Kafka's crystalline prose, we discover its exact inversion. It is prose unlike any other. It rejects so many of the "things of the novel": its tools, tricks, machinery. It is as if he is at war with the novel itself.

WHEN WE TURN TO KAFKA'S own real life, as everything he wrote induces us to do, there is still no respite. The comparison between Kafka and the rest of us is pretty damn harsh. Here Milena Jesenská, the second woman he left for literature, offers us a précis of the essential differences between a man such as Kafka and people such as you and me:

> Obviously, we are capable of living because at some time or other we took refuge in lies, in blindness, in enthusiasm, in optimism, in some conviction or others, in pessimism or something of the sort. But he has never escaped to any such sheltering refuge, none at all. He is absolutely incapable of lying, just as he is incapable of getting drunk. He possesses not the slightest refuge.... He is like a naked man among a multitude who are dressed. And his asceticism is altogether unheroic ... he is compelled to asceticism by his terrible clarity of vision, purity and incapacity for compromise.... I know he does not resist life, but only this kind of life: that is what he resists.

All novelists who are worth anything at all resist a version of life as it has been presented to them. What Flaubert meant by bourgeois life is not what his age meant by bourgeois life, and what Austen meant by the word "woman" was subtly at odds with the usage of that word in her time. But it is a rare and scary man who takes it upon himself to resist what the entire Western world since the birth of Jesus has meant by "life." Novelists simply do not resist life in this fashion. Life, in its shared social form, is, for lack of a less vulgar term, their material. They cannot say, as Kafka did, "Never again psychology!" Psychology is where they begin their work of the novel. And consciousness is the portal through which they explore the validity or otherwise of this shared social "life" that we speak of every day.

Make no mistake: Kafka fully understood the isolation of his position; he lived it. As a the son of a Czech Jew he was isolated in a Germanic culture, but as a German speaker, without any Yiddish, he felt isolated from many of his fellow Jews. As a Prague resident he was on the edge of the Austro-Hungarian Empire; as an intellectual, an antisocial vegetarian, he distanced himself from his own petit-bourgeois family; and as a novelist he knew his work existed at a remove from those novelists whose public readings he attended every week. Here he attempts to delineate this sense of extreme alterity: "I completely dwell in every idea, but also fill every idea.... I not only feel myself at my boundary, but at the boundary of the human in general."

Of course one must take into account Kafka's solipsism, which in his diaries makes singular that which in the fiction is more clearly the condition of all our lives. (Kafka wrote not only because it was impossible for him to live but also because it is impossible for all of us to live, though his point was that most of us do not grasp this.) But it is certainly the case that Kafka alone brought us to the very boundary of the novel, rejecting any interest in a writer's "subject"—a place, a culture, a community, a group of people—and replacing it with a dismantling of the very idea of subjects and subjecthood. In this regard both the overtly Freudian and the overtly religious interpretations of Kafka are misguided, insofar as they identify a definitive "subject," a final point or a "bottom line," of a prose that has no final destination, only a journey. They miss what David Foster Wallace has described as "the central Kafka joke—that the horrific struggle to establish a human self results in a self whose humanity is inseparable from that horrific struggle. That our endless and impossible journey towards home is in fact our home."

I suppose such an awfully rigorous joke loses much of its humor in the telling (though we should keep in mind the lovely autobiographical fact that Kafka could not contain his own laughter when reading *The Trial* out loud to his uncomprehending family). The laughs get even thinner when we try to employ "Kafka's joke" for our own aesthetic practice or as a way to comprehend our daily lives. This is black humor indeed, and the punch line is not that Kafka hated his father or that God does not exist. These are not the center of Kafka, because Kafka has no center. Kafka avoided every telos, all termini, purposes, meaningful endings, and resting spots the way most of us avoid the dentist, as Max Brod reminds us:

> He rejected anything that was planned for effect, intellectually or artificially thought up.... As an example of what he himself liked Kafka quoted a passage from Hofmannsthal, "the smell of damp flagstones in a hall." And he kept silent for a long while, said no more, as if this hidden, improbable thing must speak for itself.

What freaks out the novelists among us is that Kafka's rejection of the central in favor of the resonant particular on the periphery also happens to exclude that rather central matter of "other people." For it is, of course, not flagstones but people who are not in earnest, people who perform public versions of themselves, people who are frequently "planned for effect" and artificial. This aspect of our humanity may be vulgar, and it may be untrue in relation to some absolute idea of "being-as-truth"; but this "self-making," as we see it done every day, is precisely the novelist's fascination. Kafka, by contrast, had a horror of it. In his life and in his work, the artificial human relationship made Kafka despair: "In me, by myself, without human relationship, there are no visible lies. The limited circle is pure." And again: "Everything that is not literature bores me and I hate it, for it disturbs me or delays me, if only because I think it does. I lack all aptitude for family life except, at best, as an observer. I have no family feeling and visitors make me feel almost as though I were maliciously being attacked. A marriage could not change me, just as my job cannot change me."

WHAT IS THIS LITERATURE of Kafka's that is so absolute that it exists as the opposite of life and other people? It is a limited circle, to be sure, and it is pure—but can it contain a novel? On the evidence of what Brod saved from the fire, the answer is no, not quite. In fact it is here that we find partial consolation for the envious novelist and the true subject of this essay, namely, Kafka's failure. "To do justice to the figure of Kafka in its purity and peculiar beauty," Walter Benjamin wrote, "one must never lose sight of one thing: it is the purity and beauty of a failure."

At its simplest, this refers to Kafka's output. Although he completed hundreds

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of letters and fragments and stories, he never finished a novel. Writing a complete novel proved impossible, intellectually and practically. *The Castle*, *The Trial*, and *Amerika* are all unfinished; the versions we have were cobbled together by Brod after the fact and against the author's wishes. They are fragmented internally, too, the order of chapters rarely more significant than the order of parables in a collection of Hasidic stories. If part of what it is to be a novel (rather than a collection of short stories) is to have significant sequence in a narrative, then Kafka's miraculous novels fail to fulfill one of the novel's defining criteria.

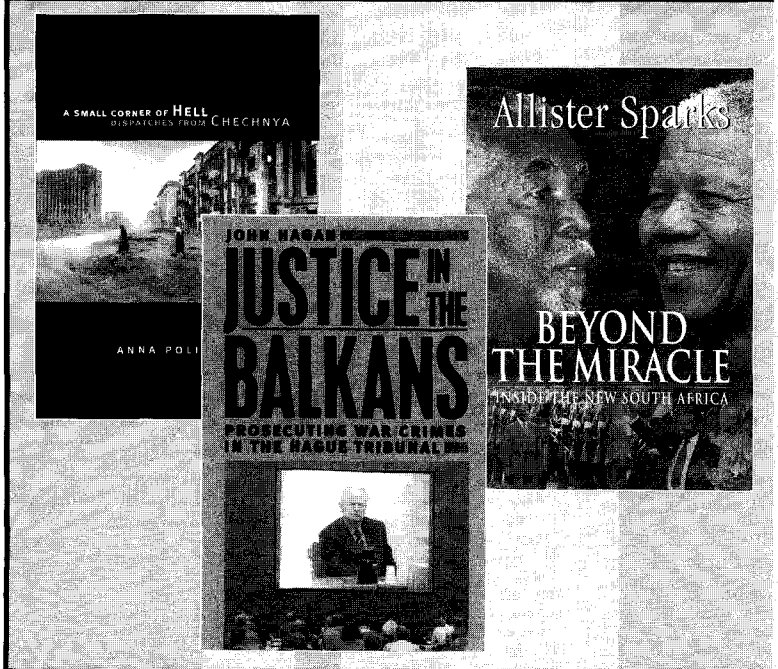
But Benjamin's diagnosis is also of a more profound failure. The peculiar beauty of Kafka lies in the very impossibility of his project, which was, I think, to express concretely—in the most precise language available—those things in life that fall outside of the concretely explicable or expressible. It is this project of Kafka's that we approach with rightful awe, and which induced Brod to identify his friend's work as "religious." But Kafka's work is analogous to religion only in its process, not in its content. It does ask you to put your faith in absolute contradiction, as God asked of Job when he punished him, and it does ask you to locate your ethics outside of the social world as you know it, as God asked of Abraham when he commanded Isaac's sacrifice; but these requests are not religious in themselves. They are part of our modern moment exactly because they commit themselves to a new transcendency, as yet undefined: "I was not led into life by the sinking hand of Christianity, like Kierkegaard, nor did I catch the last tip of the Jewish prayer-shawl before it flew away, like the Zionists. I am the end or the beginning."

If Kafka ended the possibility of the novel, the death throes have been strangely long and loud. Nabokov came after Kafka. Graham Greene came after Kafka. The reassertion of the Great American Novel came after Kafka. It seems more likely that he began something, that he helped to trigger a radical doubt in the form which then rippled throughout his century and continues to ripple rather more banally through ours, making its weekly appearances in the literary pages of newspapers and in sophomore essays on campuses. Whenever we ask whether the novel is dead, we prove ourselves the inheritors of Kafka's doubt.

In the end, however, Kafka's doubt affected nobody as much as himself. The high metaphysical seriousness of his project is what drew him to the form of the Jewish parable—that focused jolt of spiritual attention—and away from the form of the novel. In his diary, while writing the most "novelistic" of his novels, *Amerika*, a book that betrays the improbable influence of Dickens, he questioned the suitability of the novel for the work that he needed to do, describing the form as "the shameful lowlands of writing."

Kafka—the poet laureate of shame in all its delineations—felt sure that the shame of the novel would outlive him. Most novelists ask you to pay sustained attention to something outside of yourself, something in the world on which they have placed value. Frequently this is "other people," in all their shameful, worldly vulgarity. But Kafka directs your attention inward, momentarily and with great force—as Emerson did, as Kierke-

WORLD AFFAIRS
New from Chicago



A Small Corner of Hell
Dispatches from Chechnya
Anna Politkovskaya
Translated by Alexander Burry and Tatiana Tulchinsky
"Anna Politkovskaya is not a name known outside Russia. If President Putin had his way, she would not be known inside the country either. Her searing accounts of the corruption, intimidation and brutalities perpetrated by Russian soldiers in Chechnya are now almost the only source of information about what is really happening there. . . . Like Andrei Sakharov, Ms. Politkovskaya has been drawn into a lone confrontation with the State by its refusal to admit abuse."—*The Times* (UK)
Cloth $25.00

Beyond the Miracle
Inside the New South Africa
Allister Sparks
This book provides a wide-ranging and unflinching account of the first nine years of democratic government in South Africa. Covering both the new regime's proud achievements and its disappointing failures, Allister Sparks looks to South Africa's future, asking whether it can overcome its history and current global trends to create a truly nonracial, multicultural, and multiparty democracy.
Cloth $32.50

Justice in the Balkans
Prosecuting War Crimes in the Hague Tribunal
John Hagan
"This is the first book that really gets inside the workings of the Hague tribunal. Many of the key individuals come alive here, and the reader gets a good sense of the critical role of personal commitments, peculiarities, and ideologies in shaping the work of the court. Some of the sections of the book read like a good thriller, but Hagan is also making a very important argument about how individuals and groups can affect the course of human rights enforcement."—Eric D. Weitz, author of *A Century of Genocide*
Cloth $29.00

Available in bookstores • THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS
www.press.uchicago.edu

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

gaard did, as some poets frequently do—in search of a kind of pure being for which the world has no precise name. And this, too, this inexpressible thing, is also a part of our experience on this planet. We all know this; most good novelists know this, too; I believe they begin to write for this very reason. They know that some portion of this life is not adequately expressed in our newspapers, in our daily conversations, in our most intimate relationships, not even in our truth-seeking fairy-tales.

Novelists have some hint of the inexpressible—otherwise they wouldn't even try. But at a certain point in their development, consumed with a great delight at their ability to express almost everything about life, they forget this other thing, the inexpressible, which is the thing that Kafka meant by "life." "I am always trying to convey something that can't be conveyed," he writes to Milena, "to explain something which is inexplicable, to tell something I have in my bones, something which can be experienced only in these bones." The novel as a form revels in the shared world, exploring how individuals partake of that sharedness or rebel against it. Kafka concentrates on what is not shared, what is profoundly unshareable. As a result, the novel did not quite fit him. He extracted from it those things that he couldn't use, and made them strange. Two of those things were time and ethics.

II.

OUR FAVORED IDEA OF THE Kafkaesque is of a "labyrinthine bureaucracy." We think of thin corridors that lead only to doors that in turn lead to other doors. In fact, Kafka wrote very few scenes of this kind. What is bureaucratic and labyrinthine in *The Trial* is not the rooms in which Josef K. finds himself, nor even the people who obstruct him, but rather the infinite time it takes to get anywhere at all. What is labyrinthine, in Kafka, is time itself.

Before the law a door is meant only for one man, but "not at the moment." Consequently he will die waiting. How long is this moment? In an office supply closet, a man prepares to whip two people, and Josef K. looks in. The next day he returns to the door, opens it once more, and finds that "everything was unchanged.... The printed forms and inkpots just over the threshold, the whipper with his cane, the warders still fully dressed, the candle on the shelf...." Meanwhile an imperial messenger in a parable tries to get a message out of a palace, but "how vainly does he wear out his strength ... and once more stairs and courts; and once more another palace; and so on for thousands of years...." And then there is the world-famous hunger artist, whose handlers neglect to continue the tally of days written on the front of the cage. No matter how long he starves, no time will appear to have passed in the world.

This is not the time of most novels. But neither is it, as some have claimed, a dream-time, a nightmare-time, although it is true that in dreams, when we are deprived of our timepieces and our calendars, we are closer to understanding it. Kafka's time is bureaucratic—or, rather, bureaucracies reveal to Kafka something of the impossibility of time and living in it. I discovered this temporality for myself with a marvelous concreteness when I went recently to the American Embassy in London to obtain a visa. I had been given an appointment for 8:15 a.m. There were four hundred people in a line outside the building: they also had an appointment for 8:15. Many years appeared to pass; at last we were allowed inside to be given a slip with a number on it. Mine was 169. But the numbers on the screen came up at random—502, 164, 80, 670, 378—and with no discernible connection to the number of people in the room. "Would it be all right if I popped out?" I asked the guard. "Oh, yes," said the guard, cheerily. "You can always go out. You're free to go out. But then of course you'll miss your number." I sat down again. In the hall there were two celebrities, a pop singer and an actor. Both considered themselves to be special cases before the law. I watched them plead their special case, and I watched the men at the desk allowing these two to waste their own time, out of a kind of pity, if only to keep them from thinking that they had neglected to try everything.

This is the time of bureaucracy—time with no end, no demarcations, and no benign purpose. In the rather comically demarcated number 39b of Kafka's *Reflections on Sin, Suffering, Hope and the True Way,* he explains how bureaucratic time differs from time as we are trained to think of it: "The way is infinitely long, nothing of it can be subtracted, nothing can be added, and yet everyone applies his own childish yardstick to it. 'Certainly, this yard of the way you still have to go, too, and it will be accounted unto you.' " The speaker's voice here expresses time as we understand it, with our childish yardsticks, our clocks, our calendars, attempting to take an accurate measurement of the infinite mystery.

BUT BUREAUCRATIC TIME—absurd, infinite, and without revealed meaning—is for Kafka the true glimpse of reality. Benjamin called these glimpses of the infinite in Kafka "the rumor of true things ... a kind of theological whispered intelligence," and it is because it is *emet*, the truth—though it be awful—that Kafka submits to it. This has confused many readers. Since they read Kafka as an indictment of the "Modern" and bureaucracy as the "Kafkaesque nightmare," they are surprised to find Kafka's characters submitting to the bureaucratic with an almost ecstatic swoon, as if submitting to the law was the ultimate fulfillment. To resolve this perplexity, they call Kafka "ironic." This is a mistake. In Kafka's world it is always better to submit to a terrible truth than to live a comforting lie. For this reason, people in Kafka mean exactly what they say, and no irony is involved. When Josef K. argues that the doorkeeper in the parable has been deceitful by preventing the man from entering, the priest corrects him.

> "You have insufficient respect for the narrative," said the priest. "The narrative contains two important statements from the doorkeeper about admission into the law, one at the beginning and one at the end. The first is that he 'cannot grant him entry now' and the other is 'this entrance was made only for you.' If there was a contradiction between these statements, then you would be right and the doorkeeper would have deceived the man. But there is no contradiction."

We, too, have insufficient respect for Kafka's narrative. His writing attempts to hold within it contradictory ideas, and when we read him we should, like Job, resist the temptation to resolve what is irresolvable. *The impossible journey home is in fact your home. This door is meant only for you: I cannot grant you entry now.* In that *now* Kafka unpacks the human horror of what time really is,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

how powerless we are before it. He once remarked that "our task is commensurate with our life." When most of us think of time in our lives, we like to imagine it broken into many tasks, plural—children, decades, houses, careers. Novels are made of this stuff. But Kafka rejects these illusory ways of "filling" our time, and he does so with the vehemence of a teenager. Here he is on October 21, 1921, at the age of thirty-eight: "All is imaginary—family, office, friends, the street, all imaginary, far away or close at hand, the woman; the truth that lies closest, however, is only this: that you are beating your head against the wall of a windowless and doorless cell."

For Kafka, the time of our social life is untrue. To this accusation, the priest in *The Trial* retorts: "One does not have to believe everything is true, one only has to believe that it is necessary." And Josef K. replies: "Depressing thought. It makes the lie fundamental to world order." If the world lies about time, then the novel as a form is an artistic compression of this lie. From its epistolary beginnings (dates carefully written atop each letter), the novel has prided itself on a beginning, a middle, and an end, produced in convincing sequence. Yet Kafka radically doubted the novel's ability to convey our true experience of time, of how time actually feels.

The following is from the long short story "Description of a Struggle," a title as pertinent to Kafka's troubles with the form of the novel as to any tensions among the two curious characters:

> I could go home alone and no one could stop me. Then, secretly, I could watch my acquaintance pass the entrance to my street. Goodbye, dear acquaintance! On reaching my room I'll feel warm, I'll light the lamp in its iron stand on my table, and when I've done that I'll lie back in my armchair which stands on the torn Oriental carpet. Pleasant prospects! Why not? But then? No then.

Something has gone wrong in this imagined, sequential narrative—a failure of faith, maybe, or an inability to lie when necessary. The novel asks, hopefully, and always with one eye on a happy ending: But then? And Kafka answers: No then.

Kafka found "Description of a Struggle" so difficult to write that when he finished it he told Brod the only thing that he liked about it was getting rid of it. *Amerika* was similarly a battle of "and then . . . and then." There is surely something of Christianity's messianic enthusiasm for the future in this "and then . . . and then," which characterizes the novel's narrative method. But is it possible to identify in Kafka's "But then? No then" something distinctly Jewish? It is certainly a narrative attitude that turns away from soon-to-come happy endings and finality and admits instead an incomprehensible, infinite "now" that we—with our limited human consciousness—cannot comprehend. Is this Jewish time?

In certain Hasidic parables time is not a benign force marching toward our redemption, but an abject tautology that resolves itself only in God's mind. In these tales men fool themselves when they attempt to manipulate what God has revealed only in partial form. Here is one of Kafka's favorite Hasidic parables:

> A group of Jews sit together in an inn on the Sabbath, all local people except one stranger, a beggar. They make wishes around the table, imagining what they would be if they had their time again. One wishes for money, the other for a new carpenter's bench, another for a pleasant son-in-law to replace the one he has. When it comes to the beggar he says, "I wish I were a great king living in a magnificent castle. But one day the castle is attacked by rebels and I am forced from my bed with only a nightshirt on, leaving all of my possessions. I dash over hill and dale on foot, and run for days until I reach the inn I am sitting in now." "What the hell's the point of that?" asks one of men. "I'd have a shirt," says the beggar.

So much and no more is the beggar's (and our own) ability to manipulate the time of life. In parables of this kind, Kafka found a model, a compressed space to suit his aphoristic intensity. And it was when he was brief, as in the story "The Judgment," that he professed himself most satisfied. He wrote that remarkable story in a single physically demanding nocturnal burst, and compared it to an ejaculation. "Only in *this* way," he said, "can writing be done."

Kafka had come to believe that only brief work quickly done came close to

new in hardcover ~ read an excerpt on our web site

KASHMIR

ROOTS OF CONFLICT, PATHS TO PEACE

SUMANTRA BOSE

"It is essential that as many people as possible understand the Kashmir dispute, since it is surely one of the most dangerous on earth...
Sumantra Bose both captures the complexity of the Kashmir issue and explains it in ways nonspecialists can understand."
—Strobe Talbott, Brookings Institution

"Today, more than ever, the powder keg that is Kashmir demands attention...
In this balanced, deeply informed, and compelling study, Sumantra Bose unravels the tangled strands that have made the dispute over Kashmir so daunting. [He] offers a bold and innovative framework for meaningful negotiations."
—Andrew Bacevich, author of *American Empire*

HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS
800 405 1619 • www.hup.harvard.edu

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the truth of organic artistic creation. These short pieces are his greatest work, some of them only a few lines long, and in themselves pure parables of time and its deadly operations. In "The Next Village," time is so foreshortened that the narrator cannot see how the whole of a human life is long enough to ride to the next village. In "The Hunter Gracchus," a man's death ship loses its way; now he cannot die, and yet he is not alive. "I am here," he says, "more than that I do not know, further than that I cannot go. My ship has no rudder...." This is what time *feels* like. Life is like *this*. We are imperial messengers, too, and will find out that just because we have a message and plenty of time does not mean that we will ever succeed in delivering it. As Nabokov coolly tells us in the first line of his own time-defying autobiography, our existence is but a brief crack of light between two eternities of darkness.

So who are we to speak of time? "Nobody could fight his way through here even with a message from a dead man," Kafka writes in the final lines of the "Imperial Message" parable. "But you sit at your window when evening falls and dream it to yourself." That is us, at the window, dreaming, reading a novel. In novels there is time to live. Novels are our necessary lies, our journeys that lead somewhere.

III.

IN MY DICTIONARY, "KAFKAESQUE" is defined as a "vision of man's isolated existence in a dehumanized world," as if Kafka feared the rise of the typewriter or an epidemic of those threshing machines that he came across in his insurance work, the ones that so regularly removed human digits. But no. Not dehumanized; human, rather, all too human. It was people in their insatiable fullness, not in their mechanized emptiness, that Kafka feared. If he was a prophet of the coming danger, it was by predicting not the rise of the machines but the rise of a people whose sense of their own human potentiality was dangerously overflowing. He was proved correct. The Nazis did not go about their business like machines or automatons; they went about it with a lust and a passion.

Life, when it considers itself triumphant, is itself a kind of tyranny. It is triumphant life that replaces the poor hunger artist once the public has tired of him:

> Into the cage they put a young panther. Even the most insensitive felt it refreshing to see this wild creature leaping around the cage that had so long been left dreary. The panther was all right ... he seemed not to even miss his freedom; his noble body, furnished almost to the bursting point with all that it needed, seemed to carry freedom around with it too; somewhere in his jaws it seemed to lurk; the joy of life streamed with such ardent passion from his throat that for the onlookers it was not easy to stand the shock of it.

The very fullness and variety of life that novels admire—especially contemporary novels—is obscene in Kafka. One person's expansiveness will only result in another person's confinement.

Kafka had personal experience of this, living cheek by jowl with his own oppressively lively father, whom he describes in his magnificent "Letter to His Father" as possessing "the enigmatic quality that all tyrants have, whose rights are based on their person and not on reason." What would Kafka make of present-day England, where pure personality itself—otherwise known as "celebrity"—is the only defense plea that anybody need make? Those chilling final lines of *The Metamorphosis*, in which Gregor's sister takes on an "increasing vitality," finally becoming herself—springing to her feet in the train carriage, stretching her young body to her parents' appreciation—these are ominous portents of a world of unreason, where just to be full of your own life is enough.

The novel has, historically, been in love with this vibrant individual; but Kafka dreads her. All forms of individuation are to him an echo of the original division: in his blue octavo notebook he claimed to understand the fall of Adam and Eve better than any man on earth. It is separation from the eternal oneness that hurt Kafka. Even mountains and objects and skies can wound this hypersensitive sensibility, just by asserting their own separate thingness. Here he addresses the landscape: "But it is not only the mountain that is so vain, so obtrusive and vindictive—everything else is too. So I must go on repeating with wide-open eyes—oh, how they hurt!"

Yet Kafka would not be so compelling a writer if he were not himself compelled by what he most feared. As Klaus Wagenbach reminds us in his penetrating biography, Kafka was deeply affected by Kierkegaard's definition of dread: "Though dread is afraid, yet it maintains a sly intercourse with its object, cannot look away from it." Dread is a masochistic pleasure in Kafka; the circus audience dreads the life of the panther, but still "they braced themselves, crowded around the cage, and did not want to ever move away." Kafka is both disgusted and fascinated by other people's confident assertion of their own existence. His characters are frequently watching other people, not, as in a novel, in the hope of forming a meaningful relation with them, but as if by observing them one might discover how indeed it is possible to live. "And I hope to learn from you how things really are," says the supplicant in "Description of a Struggle," "why it is that around me things sink away like fallen snow, whereas for other people even a little liqueur glass stands on the table steady as a statue."

WHY IS LIFE, FOR SOME PEOple, a simple fact, obvious as a statue, while for others it remains an impossible feat? Kafka, as well as being the poet of shame, was the poet of awe. That people managed to locate and to identify themselves was amazing to him. "It is as if," comments Benjamin, "he had spent his entire life wondering what he looked like, without ever discovering that there are such things as mirrors." Here is Kafka in a letter to Brod, expressing this wonder:

> I opened my eyes after a short afternoon sleep, still not quite certain I was alive, and I heard my mother calling down from the balcony in a natural tone: "What are you up to?" A woman answered from the garden, "I'm having my teatime in the garden." I was amazed at the stalwart technique for living some people have.

Kafka had no such talent for living. The question "What are you up to?" could induce paralysis. Next door the woman answers it as if it were the simplest question in the world, which in a way it is, except that Kafka has no access to simple things. The everyday ability to self-fictionalize, to make of oneself a narrative, to say, "I am here, doing this," was miraculous and strange to him. He could allow himself to enjoy those self-creations only when they were deliberate

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and not simultaneously a self-deception. This is surely why he so enjoyed the Yiddish theater and grew fascinated with its actors, actors being the one group of people whose vulgar self-making is never disguised. It is the same fondness that Hamlet has for those traveling players. One welcomes the stage players—who are honest about their artificiality—when one lives in a world where artificiality wears the garments of the truth.

Like no other writer, Kafka is debilitated by the idea that when people say, "I am in the garden," they seem able to place their whole being into that "I." Actors, by contrast, only play with "I," it is a provisional "I"—an "I" that is never required to make a real choice and therefore, in an Aristotelian formulation, never truly reveals character. Character itself is finitude in Kafka; to say "I" is not to be, but to *not be*.

THIS DREAD OF INDIVIDUATING one's existence—of saying *I am here, doing this, this is my home, my lover*—strikes the English ear as similar to Philip Larkin's dread of "Places, Loved Ones." For Larkin, choosing a place and a person would be to close down one's infinite choice; paralysis is preferable. And for Kafka, as for Larkin, it is women in particular who shut down possibility. "Women are traps," Kafka is reported to have said, "traps which lie in wait for men everywhere, in order to drag them down into the Finite." Larkin's deeply sarcastic poem "To My Wife" catches some of this bleak madness. Kafka did not wish to—as Larkin puts it—"shut up that peacock-fan the future," but rather to hold on to the "unlimited/Only so long as I elected nothing." Likewise Kafka's nasty little parable "Rejection," in which two young people spot each other in the street, imagine choosing each other, imagine the entire relationship, imagine the pain that would result, and decide not to bother—and all this in a handful of sentences—is strongly Larkinesque. At its most comic this attitude can be reduced to: *Why bother? We're all going to die anyway*. ("Give it up! Give it up!" yells Kafka's policeman to the man who asks for directions.)

This was pretty much Larkin's attitude. He, too, couldn't see the point of individuation, seeing as how we are all hurtling toward the unindividuated abyss. He also thought his capacity for getting depressed about all this was far greater than Kafka's. In the poem "The Literary World," he responds to a diary entry in which Kafka complained he hadn't written anything for five months:

> My dear Kafka,
> When you've had five years of it,
> not five months,
> Five years of an irresistible force
> meeting an
> Immoveable object right in your belly,
> Then you'll know about depression.

Working out who was the more miserable between these two is rather a mug's game. But Kafka's ethical prose was certainly a more substantial thing than Larkin's exquisite English pessimism. For Kafka, the rejection of individuation has a serious worldly consequence. It unbalances ethics as a set of ideas situated in the world. The individual in Kafka can no longer look to a social universal for its ethical ideas, because there is no social universal and there is no convincing individual.

This is where his split from the novel truly occurs. A consummate novelist, such as Austen, tests her individuals against situations and other people in the world, locating her ethics always within the social. The philosopher Gilbert Ryle compared Austen's procedure to that of a vintner or wine taster. She studies ethical qualities in individuals not by developing the quality in a single character but rather by "matching it against the same quality in different degrees, against simulations of that quality, against deficiencies of it," in other people and in varied social situations. We get to know Elizabeth Bennet and she gets to know herself by way of a series of comparative refinements. She is tested against the world in many different ways, and as an ethical individual and therefore a social one; her moral performance is judged within the totality of a social life.

Simply put, there is nothing that is good for Elizabeth Bennet that is simultaneously bad for the world and the people she lives in and among. This is Hegel's "ethical universal." But Kafka's characters have no such relationship with the world. His refinements are sketched in absurdist circles that direct themselves inward. There is no attempt at shared meaning. "Is that what you mean?" asks a character. "That or some-

THE FIRST ANNUAL
affairs
WRITING CONTEST
FOR LAW STUDENTS

SPONSORED BY
The Marbury Institute
of Piper Rudnick LLP

Annoyed with overly technical, dry articles about law?

So are we—which is why we're inviting law students across the country to take part in our inaugural contest. We're looking for fresh, crisp writing that's accessible to general readers and lawyers alike. That's sophisticated, but not lifeless.

Up to the challenge? In 1,500 words, make an argument about a significant topic in the law and send it to us before **January 7, 2004**.

PRIZES
First Place: $2,000 and publication in *Legal Affairs*
Second Place: $1,000
Third Place: $500

"Legal Affairs is now by far the best legal magazine in the business."
—NAT HENTOFF, *columnist for* The Village Voice

For contest guidelines and more information, please visit **www.legalaffairs.org**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

thing else" is the reply. And here is another perfect Kafka sentence: "Two possibilities: making oneself infinitely small or being so. The second is perfection, that is to say, inactivity, the first is beginning, that is to say, action."

Where the good is located in this sentence it is impossible to say—in being small, in being inactive, in action, in beginning? Its punctuation frustrates us at every turn, and the things that are compared are not of a likeness; with respect to ethics, they are apples and oranges. This reminds one of Gertrude Stein at her most extreme—forcing one to think alternately, to think in unlikely, nonsensical ways, as if just doing this was an ethical ideal in itself.

The ethical individual in Kafka cannot rely on the world for his morality. Here Kierkegaard was essential to Kafka. Kafka recognized that both personally and philosophically, as he put it, "his case is very similar to mine, despite essential differences." Both Kierkegaard and Kafka left women for books, and both became fixated on the story of Abraham, who in his willingness to sacrifice Isaac introduces a concept that the Hegelian universe does not contain: faith. "The state," argued Hegel, "is in and by itself the ethical whole." The state has faith in itself—and the novel thinks of itself this way also, as a place with an internal ethical structure. The novel judges its individuals in the context of the novel's social world. But Abraham brought Isaac to the altar with no hope of recourse to the social. He could not kill Isaac because it was good for him as an individual, good for Isaac, good for the world, or even good for God. He could kill him because he had suspended the very idea of the ethical and placed his faith in something that he could neither express nor properly conceive.

This Kierkegaardian interpretation of Abraham has been called the beginning of existential thought, but Kafka is not really an existentialist novelist and his characters are not quite successful existentialists. It is true that his characters dismantle any hope of locating the ethical in the social—not without turning into a bug of a man. But after this (and here is the "essential difference" of which he spoke) they do not ascend to the kind of "self-defining freedom" that Kierkegaard recommends. Instead they struggle terribly, like Kafka did himself. They are unable to create their own ethical sphere or to create themselves, in the absence of other people and of God. It is not easy being one's own judge and jury. As Emerson warned, "If any one imagines that this law is lax, let him keep its commandment one day."

Divorcing oneself from the shared human world is a torturous process. From the very beginning Kafka wanted a prose as torturous as the process that it attempted to describe. As a twenty-year-old, he writes that "I think we ought to read only the kind of books that wound and stab us. If the book we're reading doesn't wake us up with a blow on the head, what are we reading it for? So that it will make us happy? Good Lord, we would be happy precisely if we had no books . . . we need the books that affect us like a disaster." So, no, Kafka does not make us happy like your average best-seller, but he did not make himself happy, just as Kierkegaard did not make himself happy. Judging yourself—being the whole courtroom in your own person—is no easier than being put on trial by your society or by your God. It incurs terrible wounds.

Yet still we do it, we still request judgment unprompted by higher powers: this is the great Kafka joke, the great Kafka terror, the great Kafka mystery. The king's messengers keep on delivering after all the kings are dead. Prometheus hangs against the rock so long that both he and his judges forget what he is doing there. And the officer in the penal colony will put his own body into that terrible machine long after the public has lost interest in such brutal punishments. In the absence of God or moral certainty, how we call down judgment upon ourselves is simultaneously the most horrific and the most beautiful thing about us.

Everybody is in need of judgment in Kafka, especially Kafka himself. This need in Kafka was more than a ploy or a style, it was a condition of the man. In that sense his work is indeed about psychology—but the psychology of only one man. It was the literature of one man's consciousness; the aggadah and the halakhah of Mr. Franz Kafka. Nobody else was ever remotely involved. His concretization of metaphor is symptomatic of this. He does not show you how much a man hates his work by describing his job and his colleagues, but by making these feelings concrete, material. I felt abject as a bug today. I ate shit at work. I was sick as a dog. I am insignificant as a mouse. Kafka makes the word flesh.

This is not to everybody's taste, and there is an obvious harsh judgment of Kafka that he graciously lends to one of his female characters: "You don't impress me at all. Everything you say is boring and incomprehensible, but that alone doesn't make it true. What I really think, sir, is that you can't be bothered with the truth because it's too tiring." We may accuse Kafka of this, and he will be delighted. "God, how good that makes me feel!" says the "I" character in response. "To find oneself so well understood!"

Kafka knew that life is not like that. It is not impossible to live. We do live, obviously. Here we all are. But he was in the business of postulating the opposite truth, a divine negative of the truth, which he expresses in his most difficult parable:

> "It cannot be said that we are lacking in faith. Even the simple fact of our life is of a faith-value that can never be exhausted."
>
> "You suggest there is some faith-value in this? One *cannot* not-live, after all."
>
> "It is precisely in this 'Cannot, after all' that the mad strength of faith lies; it is in this negation that it takes on form."

When we are "before Kafka," we sit waiting before an entrance that the novel will never enter—certainly not without losing its very shape—and yet must continue to strive to enter, even if it is only to wait insistently, passing the time by describing the face of the guard, or making a note of the flies on his collar. I mean that the novelist does well to keep Kafka's absolute contradictory truth somewhere in mind, because we will tell fewer lies that way. And yet "telling the truth like Kafka" also means forgetting many other significant parts of our life and our work. The ideas with which Kafka engaged—infinity, absolute paradox, inexpressibility, utter abjection in the very face of existence—are so awesome that they can sometimes hide from us Kafka's limits and failures.

Nothing can make of Kafka a bad writer, but there were things that lay outside his ken. The communal, the shared, the necessary social lie. And, most significantly, other people. That Kafka fully comprehended this lack in himself, that he measured the shape and depth of his own wound—this is finally what made him a genius. ■

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Alan Wolfe
Teach Your Children

FAMILY CIRCLE: THE BOUDINS AND THE ARISTOCRACY OF THE LEFT
By Susan Braudy
(Alfred A. Knopf. 460 pp., $27.95)

AT 9:30 A.M. ON OCTOBER 20, 1981, Kathy Boudin took her fourteen-month-old son Chesa to his babysitter, while her husband, David Gilbert, waited in the car. She planned, like any working mother, to pick up her child around 5 p.m. This was not the most realistic of expectations. Kathy's main task for the day was scheduled for 4 p.m. in Nyack, New York, about forty-five miles away. Even were she to finish her work promptly, it would be impossible to drive back over the Tappan Zee Bridge during rush hour, return the van that she was about to rent, and hop on the subway, all within an hour. At the very best, Chesa would have to be collected in the early evening.

But Chesa was never picked up by either of his parents that day. After dropping off their child, Kathy and David drove to the Bronx, rented their truck, covered the windows with contact paper, and crossed the river, where they met up with their colleagues. Those colleagues were a group of hard-nosed criminals and self-professed revolutionaries who had just robbed a Brinks truck and killed Peter Paige, one of its guards. Four sacks containing $798,000 were thrown into Kathy and David's truck; some of the robbers jumped in as well, and they began to drive back toward the bridge, followed by another van containing another $800,000 and the rest of the gang.

But their rendezvous had been spotted and the police had been alerted, so by the time the group arrived at the entrance to the New York Thruway five minutes later a roadblock had already been set up. The van was stopped, but at first the police were not sure they had the right vehicle. (They were looking for a van driven by blacks.) "Tell them to put the gun back," Kathy said to one of the officers who had begun to question them, and so they did. Unarmed, he and his colleague were sitting ducks for the bank robbers in the back of the van, who jumped out shooting. Officer Waverly "Chipper" Brown was killed immediately. Sergeant Edward O'Grady was killed while trying to reload his gun. Kathy started to run, but she was caught by an off-duty parole officer. In the confusion, David managed to drive away, but he was apprehended in Nyack along with the driver of the other vehicle.

Chesa was still at his babysitter's apartment; his planned pick-up time was almost precisely the moment when his parents were apprehended. Nine hours later, at around 2 a.m., Kathy was allowed to make a phone call from jail. She rang the home of William Kunstler, the radical lawyer, not the home of Ana Vasquez, the babysitter. Kathy had not forgotten about her son; the next day she finally reached Kunstler, who then called Kathy's father, and, together with their wives, they immediately drove to Nyack. Meeting them in her cell, Kathy asked them to pick up Chesa. It was now almost two full days after the bloody events. We do not know from Susan Braudy's terse, tough-minded, honest, and thoroughly absorbing book when and how Ana Vasquez was relieved of her charge. But we do know that Kathy's parents, understanding that their daughter was likely to be behind bars for some time, considered themselves too old to adopt her child. "We'd never heard of Pampers," Kathy's mother said. "We didn't know how to undo the stickum. The baby was crying." Kathy's fellow revolutionaries Bernardine Dohrn and Bill Ayers decided to adopt Chesa on the spot. Kathy, to her dismay, learned that as a prisoner she had no right to see Chesa, and it was not until January 1983, when he would have been twenty-nine months old, that Kathy, recently transferred to a new prison, was finally allowed to touch her baby.

The events in which Kathy Boudin and David Gilbert participated left many painful questions. How did a group of high-achieving kids find themselves in the midst of such violence? By what processes of reasoning could intelligent people conclude that criminals were revolutionaries? How could individuals who claimed to be on the side of the working class participate in the murder of a local policeman? In what ways is the search for racial equality advanced by removing the only African American policeman in a town from his job, let alone from his life? And to all these can be added the question that I have the hardest time understanding: how could the parents of a baby drop the bundle of happiness off with a stranger in order to choose death over life?

II.

FEW PARENTS WOULD HAVE MADE the choice that Kathy Boudin made, but then few of us have fathers who worked so assiduously to sleep with the people whom we invited over to the house. Leonard Boudin, possessed of a famous name in Jewish and radical circles—his uncle Louis Boudin had been one of the founders of the U.S. Socialist Party, a lawyer who defended radicals of one stripe or another, and a scholar of Marxism—impressed nearly everyone he met with his energy and his intensity of commitment. Many of those impressions were tinged with sexuality. Leonard seduced one of his daughter's friends (who happened also to be pregnant) while she was staying in her room. When Kathy's brother Michael dated Constancia Romilly—the daughter of the progressive writer Jessica Mitford and the future wife of the black activist James Forman—the father intervened again, inviting Dinky, as she was known, out for tennis dates before climbing into bed with her. Leporello's aria would barely do justice to Leonard Boudin, since Don Giovanni, at least in the opera, seduced only females. Leonard had no such inhibitions. He had a youthful love affair with Paul Goodman, shared a mistress with Fidel Castro, pursued (without success) Joan Baez, and was capable of leading a young legal associate to bed during a dinner party while his wife, accused by one person in the Boudin circle of pimping for her husband, looked the other way and smiled.

Kathy's mother, as the dinner party incident suggests, had problems of her own. Although Jean Roisman was not born wealthy, she found herself taken in by the aristocratic Leof family, whose Rittenhouse Square mansion in Philadelphia attracted prominent leftists

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(Emma Goldman, Eugene Debs, Earl Browder) and artists (Franchot Tone, Luther and Stella Adler, Horace Pippin, Marc Blitzstein, Clifford Odets). Jean's sister Esther, while in college at Penn, met and then married Izzy Feinstein, who under the name I. F. Stone would become the most famous radical journalist of his time. One member of the Leof circle, Bert Gross, who would later help to draft the Employment Act of 1946 and still later author a quirky book called *Friendly Fascism*, fell under the spell of the drop-dead gorgeous Jean and had a brief affair with her, but, knowing that she was out of reach, introduced her to Leonard Boudin, his high school classmate. Their marriage lasted fifty-two years, until his death in 1989.

An odd marriage it was. In 1953, Jean, depressed in part because of Leonard's numerous liaisons, tried to commit suicide, after which she underwent electroshock therapy. Leonard's reaction was to propose marriage to another woman. (His reasoning was that Jean had been unfaithful to him by trying to take her own life and therefore he no longer even had to keep up the pretense of being faithful to her). Rebuffed, Leonard welcomed Jean back, using her trauma to advance—and then to terminate when he tired of them—his sexual conquests.

Braudy is not always reliable in her reporting; she gets a few names and affiliations wrong. But even if half of what she says about the Boudins is true, and chances are that a good deal more than that is, this was a family circle from hell. Had Scott Fitzgerald been Jewish, he would have written about Leonard and Jean Boudin. Fighters on behalf of the underprivileged, families such as the Boudins and the Leofs lived lives of remarkable privilege themselves. (Anyone who has ever seen *The Cosby Show* will recognize the façade of the Manhattan brownstone in which Kathy Boudin grew up.) After adopting Chesa, Kathy's friends from the Weather Underground sent him to P.S. 9, attended mainly by blacks and Hispanics. After all, no one of means, no matter how leftist their sympathies, sends kids to public schools in Manhattan (Kathy attended the private Elisabeth Irwin High School, whose affiliated elementary school is the Little Red School House). Leonard exploded at the notion that Chesa would attend school with the unwashed. "My grandson must attend a traditional school," he announced to Dohrn and Ayers. "The little children are roughnecks and have no manners." For Boudin, nothing was too good for the Boudins. The family life of the Boudins was as marked by snobbery and competition as it was by sexuality and betrayal.

Some people thrive under such circumstances. Kathy's brother Michael did. At Harvard College, where he was a first-rate student, Michael came under the spell of Judge Learned Hand and eventually became a conservative, a Republican, a lawyer, and a judge. But others found it harder to live up to such pressure—including, it would seem, Kathy. People were always praising her brother. Her cousin Celia Stone had married a brilliant scientist (who would later win the Nobel Prize in biology and become a founder of Genentech). And then there was her father, a man capable of inviting one of Kathy's boyfriends for a swim for the purpose of checking out the size of his genitals.

"It seemed to Kathy that everyone in the Boudin family had 'Harvard-approved' stamped on their foreheads, except, of course, Kathy herself," writes Braudy. This was an illusion: Leonard, for all his fame, had been rejected by City College after high school (before his father pulled strings to get him in) and had attended law school at the not terribly exclusive St. John's. Still, Kathy followed in her father's footsteps. Unable to win acceptance to an Ivy League university, she went to Bryn Mawr. (Braudy was one of her classmates.) "The Boudins saw Bryn Mawr as Kathy's failure," Braudy remarks, a failure that would only be exacerbated when Kathy was rejected by Yale Law School. Aside from being a revolutionary, and not a very successful one at that, Kathy never had a career, which was as close to a cardinal sin as one can commit in the circles in which her parents traveled. (In prison, Kathy would earn her master's degree in education.)

"I'm so angry," Jean Boudin said during the pre-trial hearing for the Brinks defendants. Her anger, needless to say, had nothing to do with the taking of innocent life. "Why is Kathy doing this to us?" It is not easy to find your own self when you have a mother as co-dependent as Jean and a father as egomaniacal as Leonard. Braudy makes much of the narcissistic dysfunctionality of the Boudin family. Since Leonard was the attorney defending radicals such as Benjamin Spock and Daniel Ellsberg, Kathy—if she were either to shine in her father's eyes or to establish sufficient distance from his suffocating presence—was effectively disbarred from the practice of law. (She would briefly attend law school at Case Western Reserve University.) More, Kathy also rejected the very idea of law itself; her insurrectionary politics were intended as a repudiation of her father's decision, as the language of the day put it, to work within the system.

Thanks to the FBI, Braudy was able to listen to tapes of some of Kathy's conversations with her father. Leonard tried to impress upon his daughter what a great man he was for defending the anti-war activities of people such as Spock. Kathy would have none of it. "Either admire me or get the fuck out of my way," she told her father. "I'm the one doing serious work, manning the barricades in Chicago. I'm not interested in admiring your high jinks right now." Leonard delivered his own rebuff in return, dismissing Kathy's radical actions as "unserious pranks" and refusing to fly to Chicago to help his daughter after the Weatherman-sponsored "Days of Rage." No wonder Kathy's first call from prison was to Kunstler, her father's rival in the practice of radical law.

AT LEAST SOME OF KATHY Boudin's rather odd choices in her life were the product of the family circle in which she was raised. As Braudy's book makes abundantly clear, the Boudin-style combination of economic privilege and leftist politics is toxic. Wealth invariably gives those fortunate enough to possess it the sense that society's rules are meant for others. What good is money if it does not come with the ability to buy one's way out of the lines, inconveniences, and obstacles that ordinary people come to expect? ("I'll pay you come the revolution," Jean would tell bill collectors before hanging up on them.) Leftist politics are supposed to counter this sense of entitlement, but they often intensify it, especially in Manhattan. Persuaded that their causes are just, their motives pure, and their deeds appreciated, radicals such as those in the Boudin circle found an additional reason for assuming that the conventions of everyday life simply did not apply to them. Leonard's sexual escapades were not just the product of a man with an over-active libido. They were also the expression of someone haughty enough to believe that he could do anything he wanted and leftist enough

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to expect praise as his just reward.

Kathy never really rejected Leonard, for she, too, wanted to flout authority and to win plaudits for doing so. Her sexual adventures were perfectly continuous with those of her father; the Weathermen aimed to smash monogamy and went through periodic binges during which everyone slept with everyone else, irrespective of gender, before veering off into binges of chastity. (Leonard at least seemed to enjoy his sexual freedom; Kathy's libertinism comes off as a duty.) And just as Kathy broke the law, Leonard bent it to defend his clients. He was standing next to Daniel Ellsberg, for example, while Ellsberg informed the FBI that he was not the person who liberated the Pentagon Papers. If Leonard and Jean ever sat down and told Kathy in no uncertain terms that the end does not justify the means, especially when the means are violent, there is no record of it in Braudy's grimly fascinating book. Instead Braudy writes that friends of the family "wondered if Kathy and Michael were ever categorically refused anything"—including, one presumes, parental acquiescence in Kathy's political fantasies.

FOR THIS REASON, IT IS HARD TO take seriously the cries of betrayal issued by the Boudins at Kathy's increasingly radical actions. When Kathy entered a guilty plea for the Brinks robbery, which Leonard had taken the lead in negotiating, her father, Braudy tells us, "was wracked with alternating pain and fury: Why had Kathy thrown away her life? Was it to ruin his reputation and life?" Yet Leonard must have understood how faithful Kathy had been to his life and his work. Growing up in his household, she had learned that radicals were superior people, and she had carried herself like one ever since. Kathy's generation was frequently taken to denouncing "white skin privilege." How convenient for Kathy to include among the privileged everyone who shared her complexion, thereby allowing her (and maybe even them) to ignore the extra privileges that she enjoyed owing to her comfortable lifestyle and her do-no-wrong politics. Struggle though she might, Kathy would always be Leonard's daughter, adopting his old left sensibilities to new left strategies.

Not all of the rebels were red-diaper babies, but Kathy's diaper was the reddest of them all. Following the Freudian script with unerring accuracy, the radicals of the 1960s and 1970s called themselves a "new" left to pronounce dead the musty Stalinism of their parents. In reality, matters would prove more complicated. Unwilling to ally themselves with what they perceived as the unbending anti-Communism of American politics, new leftists often kept their criticisms of the Communist Party to themselves, and as the war in Vietnam escalated and their anger increased, they began making common cause with an earlier generation of Communists who, in their eyes, came to seem heroic.

For a Boudin, the question of what to do about the old left must have been particularly awkward. Braudy asks us to imagine what it must have been like to be a student at Elisabeth Irwin, whose graduating class each year sent ever newer recruits such as Kathy and her classmate Angela Davis into leftist causes, and in addition to be known as the daughter of the lawyer who represented Fidel Castro and the sons of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, especially when one of those sons, Michael Meeropol, was teaching Kathy to play the guitar. Those who stood in awe of Kathy's leftist pedigree were unlikely to know that Leonard, who had advised his clients not to cooperate with investigatory committees by refusing to answer whether or not they had been in the Communist Party, himself had answered the question under investigation. (It turns out that he had never joined the party and therefore did not have to provide the names of others who did.) Nor were they likely to realize that, although Leonard had defended the Rosenberg children in their custody fight, he had in fact turned down Julius Rosenberg's request to be his lawyer. (Boudin probably realized that the Communist Party wanted the Rosenbergs to be executed, the better to make them martyrs, and he was not about to be on the losing side of a famous case.)

Although the world may not have known of Leonard's ambivalent relationship with the old left, Jean and Kathy Boudin did, and they castigated him for it. "You took Judy Coplon instead of the Rosenbergs because she was so pretty and so famous," Kathy would say to her father, and she was most likely right. Judith Coplon's was one of the first great trials of what we now call the McCarthy period. Coplon had been a Justice Department clerk who was charged with stealing government documents and passing them on to the Soviet Union. Boudin won her freedom on appeal by discovering that the evidence against her had been collected illegally by the FBI. Yet for Kathy such victories, however important, could not bring Michael Meeropol's parents back to life. Braudy speculates—without evidence, but quite plausibly—that Kathy chose the next best thing: she would put herself in the shoes of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg by making herself a martyr for the cause.

It is not that Kathy wanted to be caught and put on trial; she and her Weathermen friends took pains to change their identities and to cover their tracks. Still, their ability to escape the authorities may have had more to do with the latter's incompetence and indifference than the revolutionaries realized. Kathy and her friends took unnecessary risks, such as speeding, that could easily have resulted in their capture. They cooperated with radical film-makers, evidently unwilling, despite their life on the run, to be out of the limelight. There was the decision—reached, it would seem, collectively—to have children, which is not the thing to do if you have to lam out of town quickly. Kathy herself maintained contact with her parents, the kind of communication that an FBI more interested in catching terrorists than protecting its bureaucratic turf would have been monitoring. And then there was the last desperate act, a robbery and a murder so badly planned and so ineptly executed that capture was all but inevitable.

THERE WAS ONE WAY IN WHICH Kathy certainly did act like the Rosenbergs: they abandoned their children for their cause, as she abandoned her child. But in another way Kathy must have thought she had outdone them. Julius had passed secrets to a county that was, at the time, one of our allies, one can imagine her thinking. She, by comparison, found herself in the house in Greenwich Village when one of her bomb-making comrades blew it to bits, and helped to liberate Timothy Leary from a minimum-security prison in California (only to

Grace Rare Tea
Free catalog: Award-winning, traditional, loose teas of unsurpassed cup quality. Since 1959.
Grace Tea Company, Ltd.
50 W. 17th St., NYC 10011 Tel/fax 212 255-2935
www.gracetea.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

have Leary squeal on them a year later), and planned and carried out some twenty bombings (including one in a Pentagon bathroom) and participated in numerous robberies, and assisted in the prison break of the black radical Joanne Chesimard—and all this in addition to the three lives taken at Nyack. Not for Kathy and her circle the meekness of old leftists who quietly accepted their fate.

Kathy's Rosenberg complex was understood by Rita Jensen, with whom she had shared a co-op apartment on Manhattan's Morningside Drive. Kathy asked Rita to refuse to cooperate with the grand jury investigation into Kathy's crimes. One of the few people in this saga who actually chose to protect her children rather than give them up for the cause, Rita spurned Kathy's plea and accused her friend of trying to follow in the Rosenbergs' footsteps. The same comparison occurred to David Gilbert, although he took a quite different course of action. Leonard asked David to mitigate Kathy's punishment by claiming that she and David had been manipulated by the criminals who carried out the robbery. Julius Rosenberg had refused to cooperate with the government that had put him and his wife on trial by not testifying to his wife's innocence, even though by so doing he effectively condemned her to death, and David thought Julius had done the right thing; when he was offered the opportunity to sacrifice others (and himself) for principle, he did not resist. He chose not to turn his back on his militant co-defendants, and as a result Kathy had no choice but to plead guilty. The best that Leonard could negotiate on her behalf was twenty years to life. Whether David Gilbert ever figured into his calculations the effects of his actions on his wife and his son is known only to him.

III.

"I HATE YOU, I HATE YOU FOR leaving me behind and for getting in jail," Chesa informed his mother on one of his visits to Bedford Hills. Braudy writes that he was "a violent, troubled boy." It is not difficult to understand why he beat his head against walls and was diagnosed as autistic by specialists. His mother had abandoned him and his father had chosen gang solidarity over parental love. Chesa must also have been aware of the jealous rivalry between his birth mother and his adopted mother. "It is not right that Chesa be raised by Bill & Bernardine with all decisions made by them," Kathy wrote to her father. But Kathy was in prison and Bernardine was free, and so it is not surprising who prevailed in this struggle; Chesa's adoptive parents moved him to Chicago, and out of Kathy's reach. According to Braudy, the move was crucial to his ability to get his life together.

Kathy Boudin had been a precocious youngster. In 1960, when she was seventeen, her radical political activities were featured in articles in *The New York Times* and the London *Daily Mail*. How appropriate, then, that Chesa, now a college senior, would be the subject of a profile in *The New York Times* in December 2002, after he won a Rhodes scholarship. "When I was younger, I was angry," he told Jodi Wilgoren, the *Times* reporter. "Now, I'm not angry. I'm sad that my parents have to suffer what they have to suffer on a daily basis, that millions of other people have to suffer as well." Held under maximum-security conditions, Chesa's birth parents were unavailable for interviews. But Chesa had four parents, and his adopted ones were only too happy to prattle to the newspaper. "Cecil Rhodes, I don't know what he would think if he were alive today; he'd probably be horrified," Bernardine Dohrn chipped in. "You know what I love about listening to Chesa?" Bill Ayers asked. "He confirms the natural cycle that your kids are always so much smarter and better than you are."

There is no gainsaying Chesa's success in overcoming the anger induced by his separation from his parents; but a rags-to-riches story this is not. Chesa, in fact, inherited the Boudin advantage. There is, first of all, his talismanic name: Chesa Jackson Boudin, each portion of which was carefully chosen. "Chesa," Swahili for dancer, was meant to celebrate the baby's feet-first birth and his links to the Afrocentric black revolutionaries whom his parents admired. (Their leader, Jeral Wayne Williams, called himself Doc Mutulu Shakur, and his stepson Tupac would later die a famous and violent death.) Chesa's middle name, honored George Jackson, who had been killed trying to shoot his way out of prison. And his last name came not from the undistinguished Gilbert side of his parental heritage, but from the illustrious Boudin side. It was as if the application to Yale was being written the day the baby's names were chosen. It seems somehow typical of the Boudin charm that by the time Chesa applied to college, Ivy League schools had decided to reject huge numbers of straight-A students in favor of youngsters who seemed interesting, and there could have been no child in America more interesting to all those 1960s radicals turned academic administrators than Chesa. A century and a quarter after Louis Boudinovitch was born in Russia, his name, shortened and transliterated into English, could open doors in America that had been closed to the Jews of his era.

CHESA ALSO SHARED THE SELF-centeredness of the Boudin clan. His concern for the world's victims never seemed to extend to the victims of his mother's actions. "I haven't talked to my father in twenty years," the orphaned Kim O'Grady commented when she read Chesa's account of how difficult it had been for him to inform his parents of his good fortune. And when Chesa had the gall to advise the families of the men his mother had helped kill to get over it—"I also was a victim of that crime. I know how important it was for me to forgive"—it was as if Leonard and Jean had come back to life. Where else but in the world of the aristocratic left is it possible to equate the sufferings of nine fatherless children with the tribulations of being a Rhodes scholar?

Not for Chesa, moreover, the decision of his uncle Michael to find his own understanding of how things work. The young man's politics are all one would expect from the red-diaper baby of a red-diaper baby. "I don't know much about my parents' tactics," Chesa informed Wilgoren. "I'll talk about my tactics." His denial of what his parents were really up to

Rib Cage

Eve slipped from its ridge
the only body part you don't
do evil with.

Modest, ticklish, open fan,
not quite sexual, not puritan.

Delicate accordion
—yawn, moan—
soul breathes through its comb.

EVE GRUBIN

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is about as credible as his mother's statement to the New York parole board that the money obtained in the Brinks robbery was going to be used for health clinics and recreation facilities in black neighborhoods. Of course Chesa knows all about his parents' tactics: why else would they have been in jail? At less guarded moments, Chesa wants the world to know that just as his mother's politics followed from her father's politics, his politics would follow from the politics of his mother and his father and Bernardine and Bill. "My parents were all dedicated to fighting U.S. imperialism around the world," he said of the four of them. "I'm dedicated to the same thing."

Chesa, though, differs in one significant way from his parents. For all her sense of superiority, Kathy was anything but upwardly mobile: from brownstone to Bedford Hills is not the usual course of upward mobility in America. But even at his tender age Chesa understands how to use leftist politics to get ahead in the world. "As a child, I relished my personal freedom and tried to compensate for my parents' imprisonment," he wrote in his application for a Marshall scholarship, on the off chance that the folks in England did not know who his parents were. "Now, I see prisons around the world: urban misery in Bolivia, homelessness in Santiago and illiteracy in Guatemala." It worked. Chesa got the Marshall, only to turn it down after he got the Rhodes.

SO A NEW BOUDIN HAS APPEARED to defeat imperialism, and this returns us to the question of why Kathy and her friends decided to fight imperialism by linking themselves so completely with violence. Their actions can never be excused or explained away; other people were equally as freaked out by the Vietnam War or the urban riots without resorting to armed attack. There is no denying, of course, that many were pushed to the limit by America in the 1960s; I found myself in Washington in 1969 in the streets in front of the Department of Justice—Kathy, David, and Bernardine, dressed in helmets, were there, too—swallowing tear gas as the wife of the attorney general, watching from the balcony, compared us to the Russian revolutionaries. Since then, some of my generation have had second thoughts about the Vietnam War; they now believe that we really did need to stop Communist expansion, and Vietnam was as good a place as any to do it. I do not share those sentiments; the lies that my government told and the untold number of deaths that its ideological blindness caused are still capable of arousing my fury. Now another administration has told lies in another war, even if it is a more defensible one, and it is not hard to imagine a scenario in which an even newer left will turn in frustration to new days of rage, just as it is not impossible to foresee a beleaguered administration delighted to have domestic radicals whom it can blame for America's difficulties. Chesa Boudin, in other words, may find himself in a situation not unlike the situation of his parents when they were his age. And Kathy Boudin, who was released by the parole board this past summer, will soon have the opportunity to give her son the benefit of her motherly advice. (The more unyielding David Gilbert, sentenced to seventy-five years, may never see freedom.) One can only wonder what she will tell him.

Will she tell him that however angry President Bush's policies make him, he should never play with dynamite? Will she inform him that even victims can be criminals? Will she teach him the difference between narcissism and compassion? Most important of all, will she, when he has children of his own, urge him to put the well-being of her grandchildren before everything else, and in that way learn that because other parents also love their children, violent means can rarely justify self-certain ends?

KATHY BOUDIN SHOULD KNOW all these things by now; she has certainly had time to reflect on them. But for her to pass on such wisdom, she will have to reject, and to instruct her son to reject, the legacy of the Boudin clan. Susan Braudy's book provides genuine insight into how truly disgraceful that legacy has been. In a more innocent age, we judged people and the movements to which they belonged by how they responded to the large public questions of the day. The Popular Front politics of Leonard Boudin's time wound up on the wrong side of nearly all of those public questions. It mistook Stalin's totalitarianism for social justice. It manipulated its friends and deceived its enemies. It failed the true radicals of the postwar period, those who risked their lives to overthrow communism where it had entrenched itself. It coarsened the culture. Had it ever achieved power—fortunately the old left never became as powerful as the new right insisted that it did—the country would have been far worse off.

Kathy Boudin's generation—my generation—held that the personal was political. The result was a loss of innocence, devastating in its consequences. For now we judge the people and the movements to which they belong by private criteria as well as by public ones. We examine their motives as well as their objectives, their psychology as well as their politics, their fantasies as well as their five-year plans. Although Braudy offers particulars about this awful family that we may not want to know, we know them now, and knowing them we have additional reasons to breathe a sigh of relief that the Boudins, father and daughter, never got the revolution that they craved. People who cannot control themselves should never be permitted to control others. ■

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION

(Act of August 12, 1970: Section 3685, Title 39, United States Code) 1. Publication Title: THE NEW REPUBLIC 2. Publication number: 0028-6583 3. Filing Date: September 30, 2003. 4. Issue Frequency: weekly except 12/2/02, 12/30/02, 4/21/03, 7/7/03, 7/28/03, 8/18/03, and 9/8/03 5. Number of issues published annually: 44 6. Annual subscription price: $79.97 7. Complete mailing address of known office of publication: 1331 H Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20005 8. Complete mailing address of general business offices of the publisher: 1331 H Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20005 9. Names and addresses of president, editor, managing editor: President: Stephanie Sandberg, 1331 H Street, Washington, D.C. Editor: Peter Beinart, 1331 H Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20005. Managing Editor: J. Peter Scoblic, 1331 H Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20005. 10. Owner: Martin Peretz, 1331 H Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20005. Roger Hertog, 1345 Avenue of the Americas, 39th Floor, New York, NY, 10105. Michael Steinhardt, 650 Madison Avenue, 17th Floor,New York, NY 10022. 11. Known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1% or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities: None. 13. Publication Title: THE NEW REPUBLIC 14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below: 09/29/03 15. Extent and nature of circulation: Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: a. Total number of copies: 79,880 b. Paid and/or requested circulation: (1) Paid/Requested outside-county mail subscriptions stated on form 3541: 65,494 (2) Paid in-county subscriptions: 0 (3) Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, counter sales and other non USPS paid distribution: 5,314 (4) Other classes mailed through the USPS: 964 c. Total paid and/or requested circulation: 71,772 d. Free distribution by mail (samples, complimentary, and other free):(1) Outside county as stated on form 3541: 1,248 (2) In county as stated on form 3541: 0 (3) Other classes mailed through the USPS: 0 e. Free Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or Other Means): 0 f. Total free distribution (sum of 15d and 15e): 1,248 g. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and 15f): 73,020 h. Copies not distributed: 6,860 i. Total (sum of 15g & h): 79,880. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation (15c/15g x 100): 98.29% Actual number of copies of a single issue published nearest to filing date: a. Total number of copies: 69,310 b. Paid and/or requested circulation: (1). Paid/requested outside county mail subscriptions stated on form 3541: 56,347 (2). Paid in county subscriptions: 0 (3) Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, counter sales and other non USPS paid distribution: 4,913 (4) Other classes mailed through the USPS: 463 c. Total paid and/or requested circulation: 61,723 d. Free distribution by mail, (samples, complimentary, and other free) (1) Outside county as stated on form 3541: 1,302 (2) In county as stated on form 3541: 0 (3) Other classes mailed through USPS: 0 e. Free Distribution Outside the mail (Carriers or Other Means): 0 f. Total Free distribution (sum of 15d and 15e): 1,302 g. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and 15f): 63,025 h. Copies not distributed: 6,285 i. Total (sum of 15g & h): 69,310. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation: 97.93% 17. I certify that all the information furnished above is true and complete. (signed) Stephanie Sandberg, Publisher & President

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CAMBRIDGE DIARIST

Declarations

LAST WEEK, PALESTINIAN terrorists attacked a U.S. diplomatic convoy in Gaza, killing three American security contractors attached to our embassy in Tel Aviv. Some Palestinian officials panicked, lest this latest atrocity further alienate them from the Bush administration (which, after all, provides part of the Palestinian Authority's funding). So the P.A. denounced the attack with unusual vehemence. Even Islamic Jihad and Hamas suddenly discovered scruples and proclaimed that their killings are aimed at Israelis only.

OF COURSE, MURDERING ISRAELIS, AND Jews more generally, but exempting Americans, hardly changes the terrorists' moral status. But, as it happens, as *Boston Globe* columnist Jeff Jacoby has detailed with names and numbers, the exemption is a fiction anyway. Indeed, as anyone who watches Palestinian media on the Web surely knows, the United States is the declared enemy of each and every armed militia in the territories that our government so desperately wishes will soon become Palestine. The difference between the Palestinian militias and Al Qaeda is merely one of scope and public relations. It is time we stop pleading with the P.A. to clamp down on terrorism. They won't.

WHAT WERE THE AMERICAN EMISSARIES, whom these three murdered men were supposedly protecting, doing in Gaza anyway? They were en route to interview Palestinian candidates for Fulbright fellowships to the United States. How sweet! And how credulous! Are we so sure that these students would have internalized the tolerance that defines the American academy and brought it back home? Or would they simply have grown more hostile toward a West they neither understood nor respected, as did many of the September 11 hijackers during their sojourns in Europe and the United States?

THE AMERICAN VISITORS TO GAZA HAD informed the P.A. of their convoy's route, schedule, composition, and markings. The territory on which it was journeying was completely controlled by the Palestinians. Presumably, they assumed, the entourage would be protected. But, to the contrary, as John F. Burns (who does not, as it happens, much like Israel) reported in *The New York Times* on October 16, the bombing "showed every mark of a carefully planned operation." The effort to safeguard the visitors actually provided the killers with the data they needed. In one way or another, this was an inside job. At the site of the bombing, with "debris, blood and human tissue spread over a wide area," Burns notes, "feelings ran high." Against the bombers? No. The gathering crowd stoned the Western investigators and journalists who had come to survey the carnage.

HENRY FORD WAS AN ANTI-SEMITE, AND he spent a good deal of his money facilitating the mass production of hate against Jews. A recent book by Neil Baldwin, *Henry Ford and the Jews* (PublicAffairs), tells the intriguing story that Ford's decent and honorable descendants have finally lived down. The Ford Foundation, as it happens, no longer has ties to the Fords themselves. But the foundation carries on the patriarch's legacy nonetheless.

THE FOUNDATION, IT TURNS OUT, HAS spent millions bankrolling dozens of Palestinian groups that have been in the forefront of the anti-Jewish and anti-Israel campaign now spreading around the world. Edwin Black of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency (*jta.org/ford.asp*), in meticulous articles in the *Forward* and *The New York Sun*, reveals that the Ford Foundation has funded Palestinian nongovernmental organizations that helped turn the anti-racism conference in Durban in 2001 into an orgy of Jew-hatred. What's more, the foundation has also given money to organizations with ties to terrorists. Under duress from the Treasury Department, which requires that funders know how their money is actually spent, Ford (and other donors) commissioned an audit by Ernst & Young of one grantee that revealed improprieties so great that nobody could reasonably tell whether it had been buying bombs or books. The Ford Foundation has long been reckless in its U.S. grants. Now, its reckless generosity is empowering foreign haters and apologists for killers.

"THE JEWS RULE THE WORLD." SO SAID Mahathir Mohamad, the prime minister of Malaysia, at the opening of the assembly of the 57-nation Organization of the Islamic Conference on October 16. "We are up against a people who think," he said with grudging admiration of the Jews. "They survived two thousand years of pogroms not by hitting back but by thinking. They invented socialism, communism, human rights, and democracy so that persecuting them would appear to be wrong, so that they can enjoy equal rights with others. With these, they have now gained control of the most powerful countries, and they, this tiny community, have become a world power."

THERE IS MORE: "WE NEED GUNS AND rockets, bombs and warplanes, tanks and warships for our defense. But, because we are discouraged from learning of science and mathematics as giving no merit for the afterlife, today we have no capacity to produce our own weapons for our defense." There is a kernel of truth in this last sentence, but it is surrounded by a thick layer of paranoia and envy. None of which precluded the foreign minister of Egypt, Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Abdullah, and high-profile delegates from many other Muslim countries from endorsing the comments. Even President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan applauded Mahathir's nutty view of history.

THE EUROPEAN UNION WAS ABOUT TO insert into its 19-page overall summit document two sentences criticizing the speech: "[Mahathir's] unacceptable comments hinder all our efforts to further interethnic and religious harmony, and have no place in a decent world. Such false and anti-Semitic remarks are as offensive to Muslims as they are to others." Not quite true, these last words, sadly. Still, we get the intention. But the EU only speaks in unison, and President Jacques Chirac objected that there was no place in an EU declaration for a statement of this kind. The prime minister of Greece also objected. So the EU, which scrutinizes and criticizes Israel's every official word and deed, is now silent about a primitive and ugly declaration that won the plaudits of nearly every Muslim government in the world. Tell me that the French government—or the Greek, for that matter—does not encourage Jew-hatred. **MARTIN PERETZ**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Forgotten Schools

John E. Chubb is chief education officer, Edison Schools; distinguished visiting fellow, Hoover Institution; and member, Hoover's Koret Task Force on K–12 Education.

Despite the strong demand for charter schools, the educational options they provide, and the energy generated by the belief that urban schools need dramatic improvement. But why hasn't this push produced more results? **The story of five forgotten schools serves as one example of the hypocrisy of some school reform**—opponents of major change claiming they want to improve schools but being satisfied with merely blocking change.

In December 2000, at the prodding of former mayor Rudolph Giuliani, the New York City Board of Education made national headlines by initiating a bold reform to improve five of its most chronically poor-performing schools. The schools were to be partnered with a private manager to turn them around. Edison Schools, Inc., had been selected, after a lengthy review process involving multiple applicants, to run PS 161 in Harlem, PS 66 in the Bronx, and MS 320, MS 246, and IS 111 in Brooklyn.

But there was one stipulation. The parents at each school had to vote to approve the initiative. In no time local activist organizations and the city teachers union, all with vested interests in keeping the schools under direct board control, launched a noisy campaign of misinformation, denouncing Edison as a profiteer, the mayor as an enemy of public education, and the board as a bunch of backroom dirty dealers. The initiative was voted down in all five schools.

Lost in the debate was the tragic disservice these schools were doing to children. In January 2001, while activists were defending the schools against outside intervention, the schools were quietly failing most of their students. On average only 19 percent at each school achieved proficiency on the New York state reading assessment. Of course, the protesters promised to work for the schools' improvement after the voting was over.

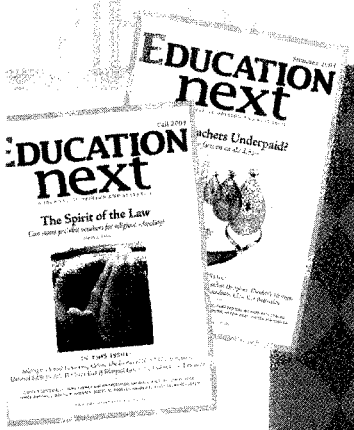
But what happened? One school, IS 111, was closed and another, MS 320, was reconstituted. **The four schools that remain open in their new or original forms continue to fail their students miserably.** Two years later reading proficiency rates have improved only 4 percentage points on average.

Meanwhile, Edison has been working with community groups elsewhere in the state—the Bronx, Buffalo, Rochester, Albany, and Riverhead—to open six charter schools. These schools serve children with high levels of economic need whose test scores two years ago looked just like the scores in the five New York City schools. But today, those charter schools have taken their students to promising heights, raising their state reading scores an average of 17 percentage points. One has to wonder whether this kind of progress could have come to the five schools, now sadly forgotten, in New York City.

The New York City Board of Education has been dissolved, replaced by direct mayoral control of the schools. The new chancellor, Joel Klein, is not beholden to any of the groups that squelched the partnership with Edison. The politics of school reform now hinges on the support for Mayor Mike Bloomberg, who appoints the chancellor. Thus far Chancellor Klein has shown tremendous resolve to buck the status quo, maintain a focus on children at all costs, and embrace ideas his predecessors found too hot to handle. For the sake of the hundreds of troubled New York City public schools, let's hope he keeps it up.

— John E. Chubb

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University



Interested in cutting-edge ideas about K-12 education?

Subscribe to ***Education Next: A Journal of Opinion and Research.***

Visit us on-line at www.educationnext.org or contact us to receive a complimentary copy.

Hoover Institution ...ideas defining a free society

Toll-free: 877.466.8374 Fax: 650.723.1687

info@hoover.stanford.edu www.hoover.org

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

UPDATE

SAUDI ARABIA: WAR ON TERRORISM

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Many of the world's nations have long relied on internal agencies and controls to guard against terrorist infiltration and to thwart potential attacks. Now, however, governments around the world are being asked to acknowledge their responsibility to the global community by sharing information and intelligence on would-be threats.

International cooperation is essential to successfully defeat terrorism. Saudi Arabia supported many international efforts through multilateral and bilateral agreements long before the war on terrorism reached American soil. In 1996, for example, Saudi Arabia established a joint Counter-Terrorism Committee with the United States. This task force, comprised of intelligence and law enforcement personnel, was formed to share information on Al-Qaeda.

Since September 11, our two nations have stepped up cooperation by meeting regularly to exchange information and resources, as well as develop action plans to root out terrorist networks. We clearly recognize the need to publicly report our progress as we assess the effectiveness of our initiatives:

- In August 2003, a new U.S.-Saudi task force was formed to concentrate on terror financing.

- In May 2003, a U.S.-Saudi task force was organized from across law enforcement and intelligence agencies to share "real time" intelligence. This enables us to work side by side in joint operations to combat imminent threats.

- Also in May 2003, Saudi authorities worked closely with U.S. and British law enforcement agents who came to the Kingdom to assist in the investigation of the Riyadh attacks.

- Saudi Arabia has provided extensive intelligence and military cooperation in the assault on Al-Qaeda. Public disclosures to date have revealed major Saudi contributions to the breakup of a number of Al-Qaeda cells, the arrests of key Al-Qaeda commanders, and the capture of numerous Al-Qaeda members.

- Saudi Arabia is actively engaging other countries to locate and extradite Al-Qaeda operatives who may be hiding in those countries.

We remain committed to working closely with the United States and other allies in the world community to ensure that information is effectively shared between all nations dedicated to ending the scourge of terrorism.

"The target of the Al-Qaeda terrorists is Saudi Arabia and the United States and the 70-year relationship that has benefited both our peoples; and at a time when we are working together to bring peace and stability to the people of the Middle East, their aim is to destroy our alliance through violence. But they will not succeed."

Prince Bandar bin Sultan, Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to the United States
May 13, 2003

"The Saudis are providing increasingly important support to our counter-terrorism efforts – from arrests to sharing debriefing results."

George Tenet, CIA Director
February 11, 2003

THE PEOPLE OF SAUDI ARABIA
Allies Against Terrorism
www.saudiembassy.net

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED